ISSUE 40 • STUNNING CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

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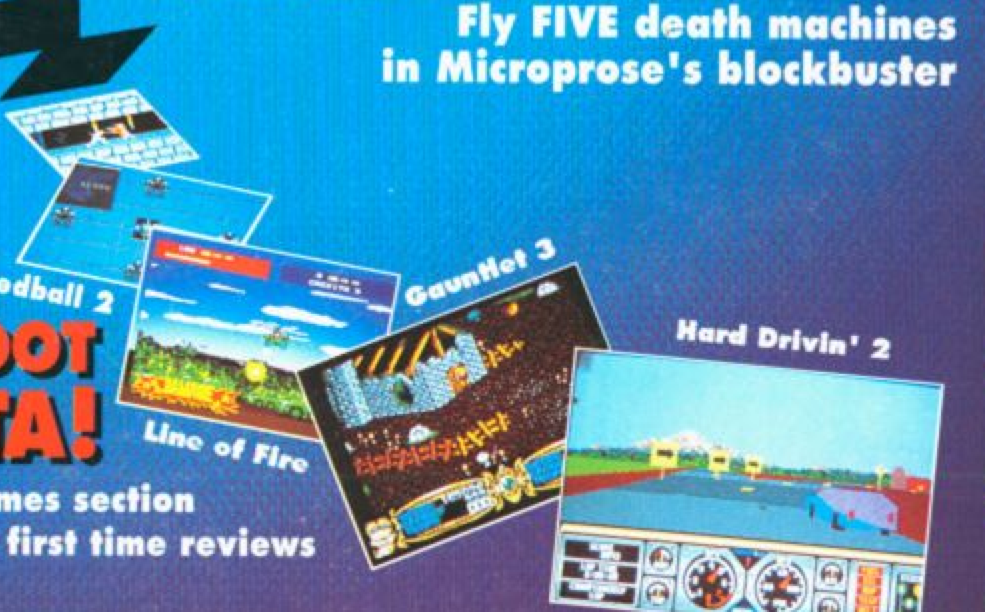

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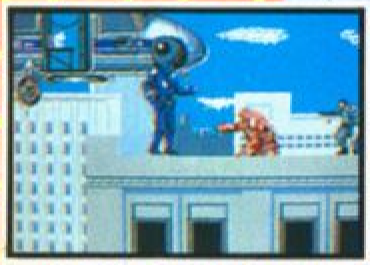
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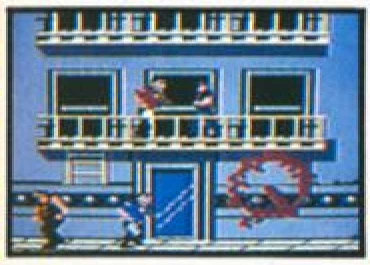
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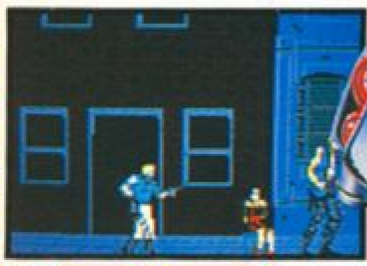
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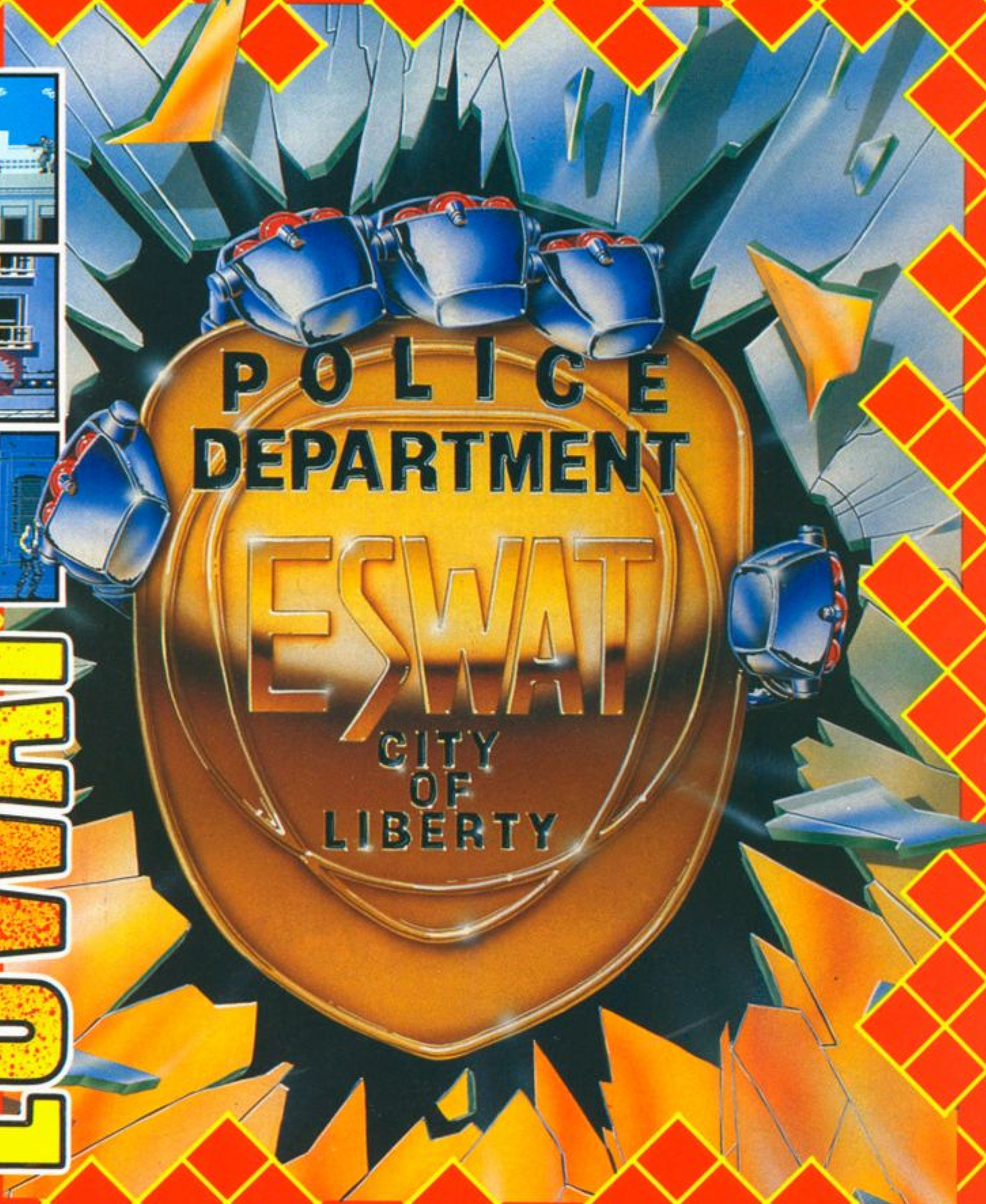

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40

"Is this a dagger which I see
before me?
...Come, let me clutch thee: I
have thee not, and yet I see
thee still...or art thou but a
dagger of the mind?"

Spoken during an early Virtual Reality session and later incorporated into a play by Shakespeare

IMPORTANT NOTICE

ACE has always been published on the first Thursday of every month. However, this has resulted in restricted availability for certain issues and we have therefore decided that in future the magazine will be published on the 8th of every month. Think 8, think ACE, and you won't miss out!

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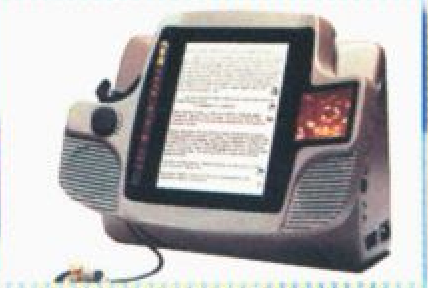
reviews

The latest releases on computer, console and CD are all given the authoritative ACE treatment...



This, ladies and gentlemen is *Cornucopia*. CD technology used to it's full potential? See p. 111

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HI-00060200
STAGE 2
9:08

Dragonbreed from Activision. A complicated coin op conversion if ever there was one. See page 91

The world's very first Virtual Reality arcade machine – in all its glory on page 18

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ON CD *page 111*

Exclusive preview of the latest DVI Workstation

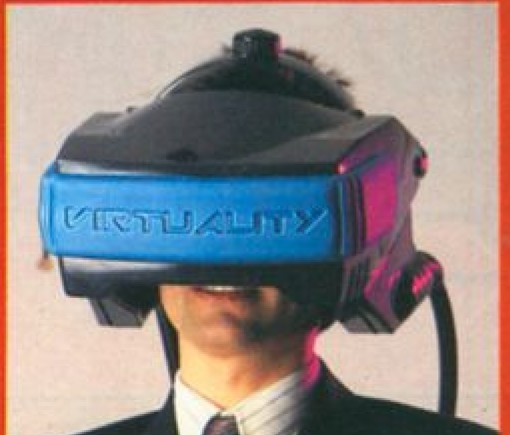
ROARING 40S

Life begins at 40, so they say, and ACE is entering a vital new phase of its development as we begin a journey into the real future of gaming.

And it's a journey that we'll be sharing with you every inch of the way as we set out over the next few months to chart the progress of Virtual Reality – the most significant entertainment concept of the 20th Century.

Think we're exaggerating? No sir. We've held back on VR coverage until we were 100% convinced of its relevance to our readers. In the last six months we've sent correspondents to Los Angeles, New York, Leicester, Tokyo, and Italy to check out the VR stories. And we're convinced. Along with CD technology, this is going to be the BIG one.

We'll be spilling the beans about VR in every issue from now on. Join us each month and discover the new worlds of 21st century gaming.



Stand by to enter a whole new world of gaming: VR technology is developing faster than anyone could have imagined – catch up with it on page 18n

New Age relaxation gaming from Infogrames: Alpha Waves promises to relax, awaken and soothe gamers with its cosmic colour arrangements and sensitively-pitched gameplay. Nervous wrecks seek solace on p. 46.

Gail Wellington gets ready for the presentation of the incredible CDTV in New York.

THAT'S INTERTAINMENT!

ACE braved the New York streets last month to bring you a full two-part report on one of the year's most important conferences on interactive entertainment. Those attending included Chris Crawford, arguably the world's most influential games designer; Myron Krueger, the man who coined the phrase 'virtual reality'; Nolan Bushnell, the man who launched Atari and is now in charge of CDTV development; Rich 'Powerglove' Gold, and Brian 'Loom' Moriarty. Meet them all in this issue and the next, when we'll be concluding the two part series with a look at hyperfiction and cyberspace.

PHEW! CHRISTMAS! It's been a hectic four weeks here at ACE. No mince-pie scenario for us. This time of year is the busiest and best for the Entertainment "Biz", and as a result, we've been frantically preparing a festive treat of an issue for you. *Speedball 2* delivers frenetic action. *4D Driving* and *Boxing* offer polygon sports simulation. And *Prince of Persia* will enchant you with its stunning animation. We've also got a report from the *Intertainment Show* in the States, and the scorching *Computer Graphics Show* here in the UK. And as the world of CD applications grows, we take a sneaky look at the *DVI Workstation,* a truly incredible piece of kit. Oh yes, and for your stocking, a £25000 Virtual Reality machine. Sign that cheque!

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P34 MEGAOFFER!
Buy yourself a fine quality game from our selected list and scoop a thoroughly desirable free gift!

A glimpse of tomorrow. This is a view from inside the Virtual Reality machine from W Industries. Read all abaht it on page 19.

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ACE
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ZERO HERO
HITS
SUPERSTAR
GEN
ELECTRONIC ARTS
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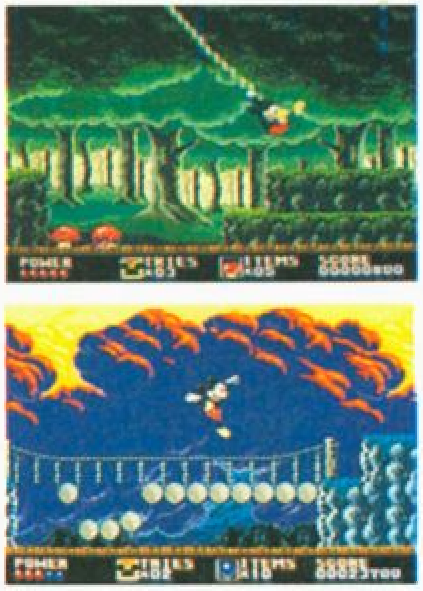
NEWS

Mickey Mouse Sega Software



Castle of Illusion is a new game for the Sega Megadrive featuring the famous Mouse from the wonderful world of Disney. You control Mickey on a three-stage romp through enchanted forests, crazy houses and rocky waterfalls. Castle of Illusion costs 4800 yen (around £19) in Japan. Special thanks to ASCII Corporation.

What's the difference between a Panther and a Gigadrive ?

Rumours suggest both Sega and Atari are currently developing the next generation of console machines which will incorporate the most advanced graphics and sound processors found in any home-based system.

Bob Gleadow, the UK boss of Atari, told ACE earlier this year about the Panther project - a console based around jacked-up ST hardware but not necessarily compatible with existing ST software. Atari will apparently be putting the Panther up against Sega's Megadrive with a predicted price of under £150. Panther prototypes are due to be shown at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas next month. Atari isn't saying anything more about the machine till then.

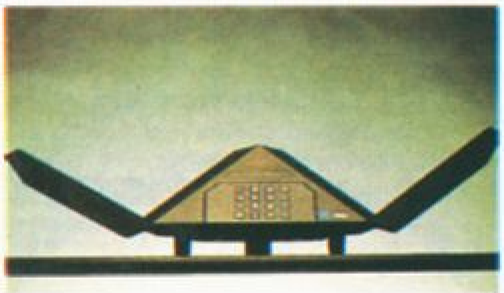
Meanwhile, Sega is working on the Gigadrive - a new console design based around the 32-bit technology used in Sega's impressive arcade machines. These coin-ops feature some of the best sprite engines in the world - a tool useful in producing stunning shoot'em-ups and racing games. Sega, one of Japan's leading games companies, believes there is room in the market for a deluxe console costing as much as £500 with a more diverse range of titles than the steady supply of sports-sims and arcade games released on its 16-bit Megadrive console. No launch date has yet been set but early 1992 seems the most likely time to release the Gigadrive to the power-thirsty Japanese public.

Nintendo currently dominates the console market with its Famicom system which has sold over 40 million units worldwide. If you can't wait for either the Panther or Gigadrive, you might like to try Nintendo's newest console. Launched in Japan last month, the Super Famicom fuses 8-bit processing power with 16-bit graphics and sound technology for the very low price of 25000 yen (approximately £100). Nintendo's console has already attracted a wide range of software support including conversions of Populous, Dungeon Master, Super Mario World, Sim City, Super R-Type and Gradius III. No official UK release date or price is available at present, but insiders tell us it will be over here before Christmas '91.

USA Today runs a 24-hour on-line sports news and information service in the States. "The USA Today Sports Centre turns your computer into a local online sports network," says USA Today. You can also compete in national fantasy baseball, football and baseball leagues and tournaments.

French launch 'Stealth Phone'

The French feel for aesthetic style even extends to making phone-calls with a telephone that would sit well in an American B2 Stealth Bomber! FCR's Axel matt-black system is used for multi-conferencing and must be the number one choice for cybercallers. Axel was displayed at a recent Applica '90 exhibition in France. Unfortunately, it's not BT improved... yet.



Now you can dial your baby's number in secret

Mindscape signs Crowther for Captive 2

In an unsurprising move, Mindscape International – the UK subsidiary of a giant American software company – has signed up veteran British games programmer Tony Crowther.

Crowther shot to fame in the early eighties as the guy who could write successful computer games in just two weeks. Through the years he's had a sting of hits – and a few turkeys – including Loco, Blagger and Trap.

His first 16-bit game, Captive, has been one of Mindscape's most successful products during 1990. This ACE-Rated sci-fi role-playing game surpasses even the mighty Dungeon Master in terms of both depth and playability.

One of Crowther's first projects for Mindscape will be an Extra Missions Disk for Captive. This will be followed late next year by Captive 2, a completely revamped game with even more levels – after all, the original has only 65000 stages to complete!

Phil Harrison, Software Development Manager at Mindscape, told ACE: "Obviously we're delighted to have Tony onboard, if you think Captive is good you'll flip over Captive 2".

Sensible Software is writing a follow-up to the classic C64 shoot'em-up Wizball – due sometime next year courtesy of Ocean.

16672

The best (or worst) of both worlds – a PC able to play Megadrive games carts.

Sega and IBM Develops Megadrive-Compatable PC

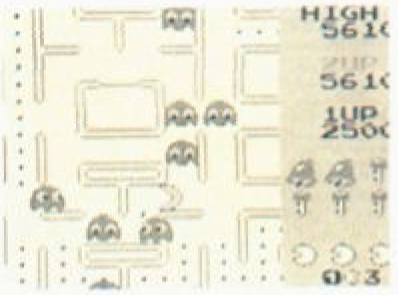
IBM and Sega in Japan are jointly developing a 16-bit micro which will be compatible with both PC software and Megadrive games cartridges.

The forthcoming system, rumoured to be called the Terra PC, has 286 and 68000 CPUs on the same board which means that programmers may be able to develop Megadrive games on it. The machine features VGA graphics which can be displayed on a TV or monitor.

There will be three models. The most expensive will have a hard disk, 3.5" floppy drive and 2.5Mb of memory. The price is expected to be about 200000 yen (approx. £800). An optional CD-ROM drive will also be available when the machine is launched in Japan during April next year.

Michael Katz, President of Sega America, was close-mouthed about the project at a recent New York conference. European and/or US release dates are still uncertain.

The inclusion of a CD in the package at a later date sounds particularly interesting, since IBM are strongly rumoured to have plans for the low-cost CD market. Could the IBM/Sega partnership bring us the first DVI games machine?



Pacman is back on the Nintendo Gameboy. Look out for a review of this Namco cart as soon as we get our hands on it.

Intel is working on a set of chips that allow micros to mix television pictures, still photos, computer animation and stereo sound. The i750 video processor is one of the first multi-media chipsets and effectively shrinks Intel's DVI boards into two silicon chips.

NINTENDO IN TABLOID SHOCKER

The well respected Sunday newspaper, The News of the World, recently ran a story on Nintendo's alleged 'bad-effect' on children. The paper said American kids are skipping school to play on their Nintendo Famicom console and forming gangs to fight over which game is best. Write into ACE if you've formed a Super Mario Bros. gang!

PIPE
16
C
1P
2P

Pipe Dream, the ACE-Rated arcade puzzle games, is now available on coin-op format thanks to Video System in Japan

Anco's Kick Off soccer simulation is being converted over to the Super Famicom, Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega Master System and Megadrive consoles.

CAVES OF CHAOS

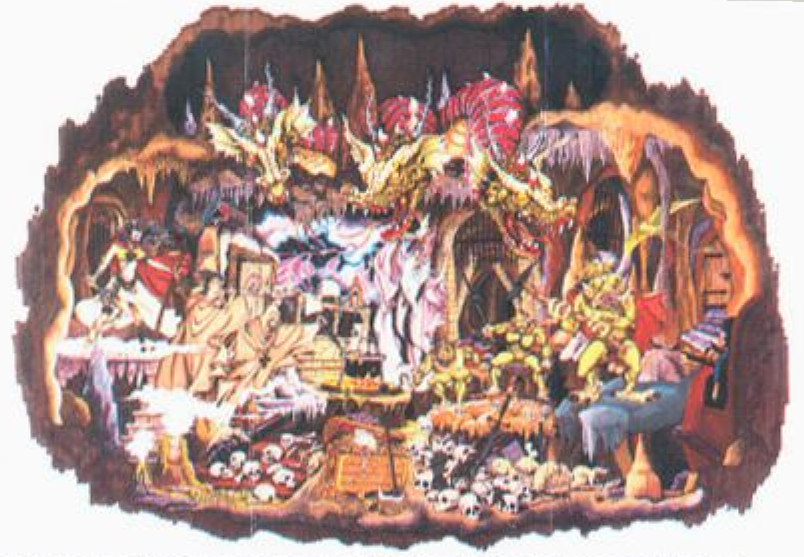
US company Laser Games International has developed a live role-playing system for amusment parks. Called LaserQuest, the system takes the old 'paint gun' combat arena concept and updates it using lasers, computers, and animatronics.

The first major scenarios, Caves of Chaos and LaserQuest, pit players against a succession of 'hazards' as they make their way through a computer scanned environment. In LaserQuest starship, where you fend off giant bug eyed monsters before attempting to repair the crippled craft.

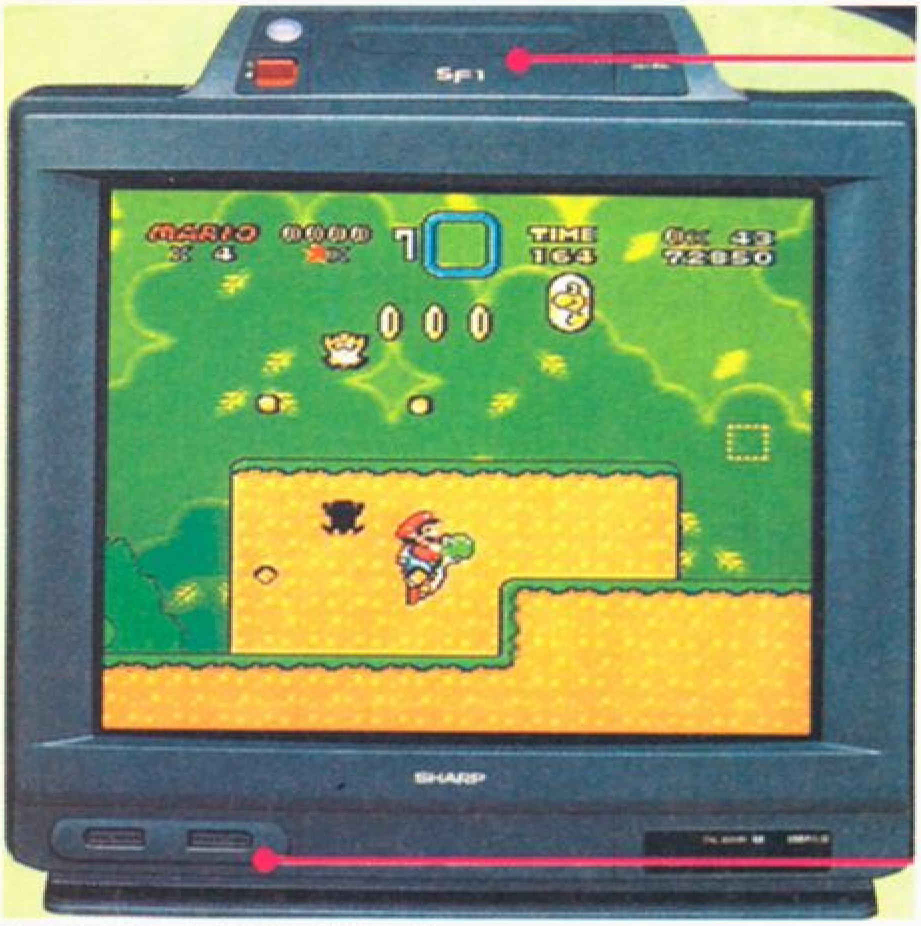
Caves of Chaos is a more typical D&D scenario, where you and three companions must use magic and muscle to save the kingdom from the forces of destruction.

The monsters come courtesy of animatronic technology, used so effectively in Disney's theme parks. Monsters have sensitive 'Achilles heels' that react to laser light and trigger dying movements – provided the player can shoot them in time. The playing areas are all sensitised and can track the progress and performance of individual players. The giant spiders, we were amused to note, appear in both scenarios – economics rather than ecology, we suspect.

LaserQuest looks pretty primitive as far as state of the art technology goes – you're not going to see holographic figures leaping out and threatening to make mincemeat of you, and the scenario of Caves of Chaos is hardly original. But you could say much the same about Disneyworld – and everybody knows how much fun THAT is!



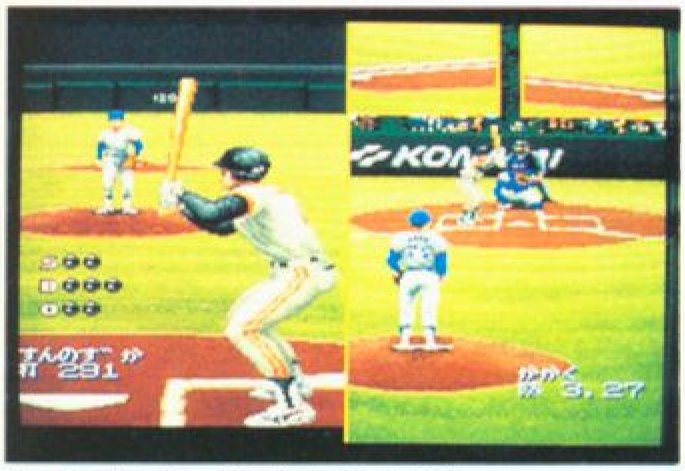
Publicity artwork for Caves of Chaos – let's hope the real thing looks...er...equally unreal



Sharp is about to launch a 19" colour television with a built-in Nintendo Super Famicom console. No price has been announced.

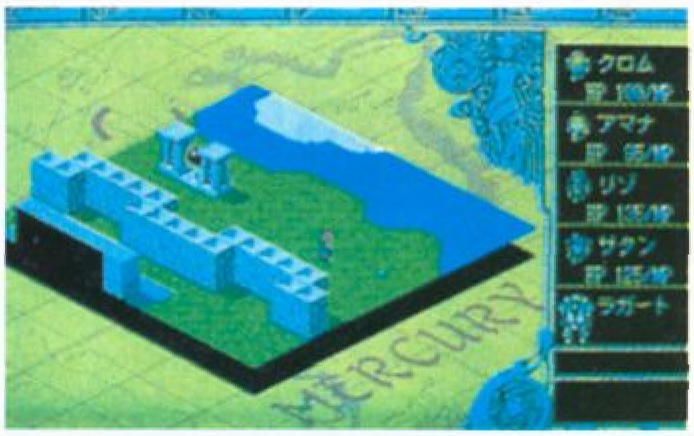
The first TV with a games control panel...

...and a games cartridge socket!

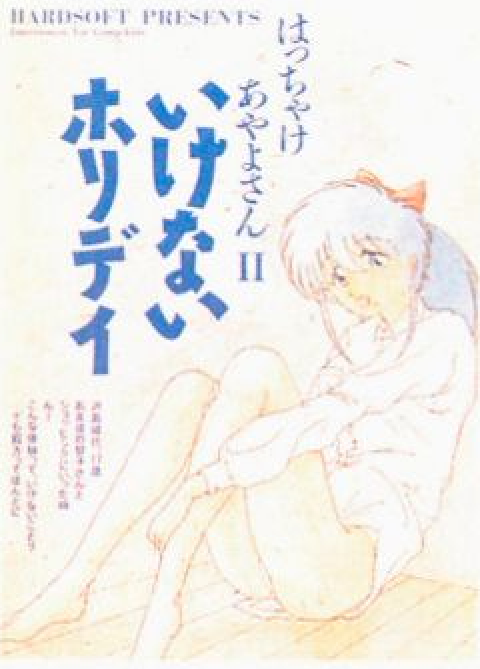


Konami has released one of the best looking Baseball games ever seen in silicon for the Sharp X68000.

Hi there, ASCII! Special thanks to ASCII Corporation and LogIn magazine for their assistance in bringing you these stories. We'll be running a feature on LogIn magazine in the Spring of 1991 – don't miss it!

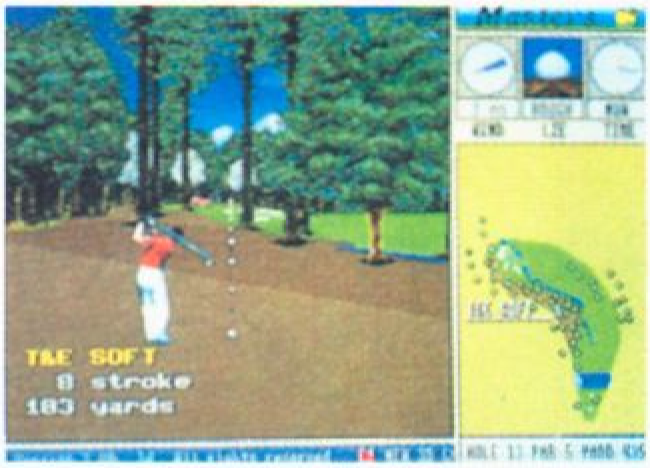


Japanese gameplayers are fascinated by the games *Populous* and *Sim City* so it was inevitable that Maxima would produce a game that combines elements from both. *Mercury - The Prime Master* costs 8800 yen (approx. £35) for PC9801 computers.


HARDSOFT PRESENTS
はっちゃけ
あやよさん II
いけないホリデイ

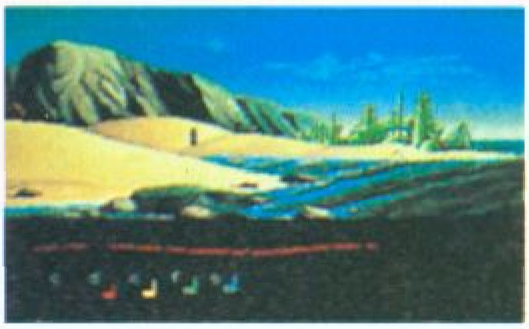
The Eastern culture can be surprising at times, especially the Japanese lust for teenage girls wearing little more than a smile in comic books and computer games. The appropriately named Hardsoft provides games too indecent to print in a family magazine so here's the picture of a box from one of its games...

The Techno-Human Company alias Konami – the world's largest games company – is looking for game designers, programmers, musicians and graphics artists.



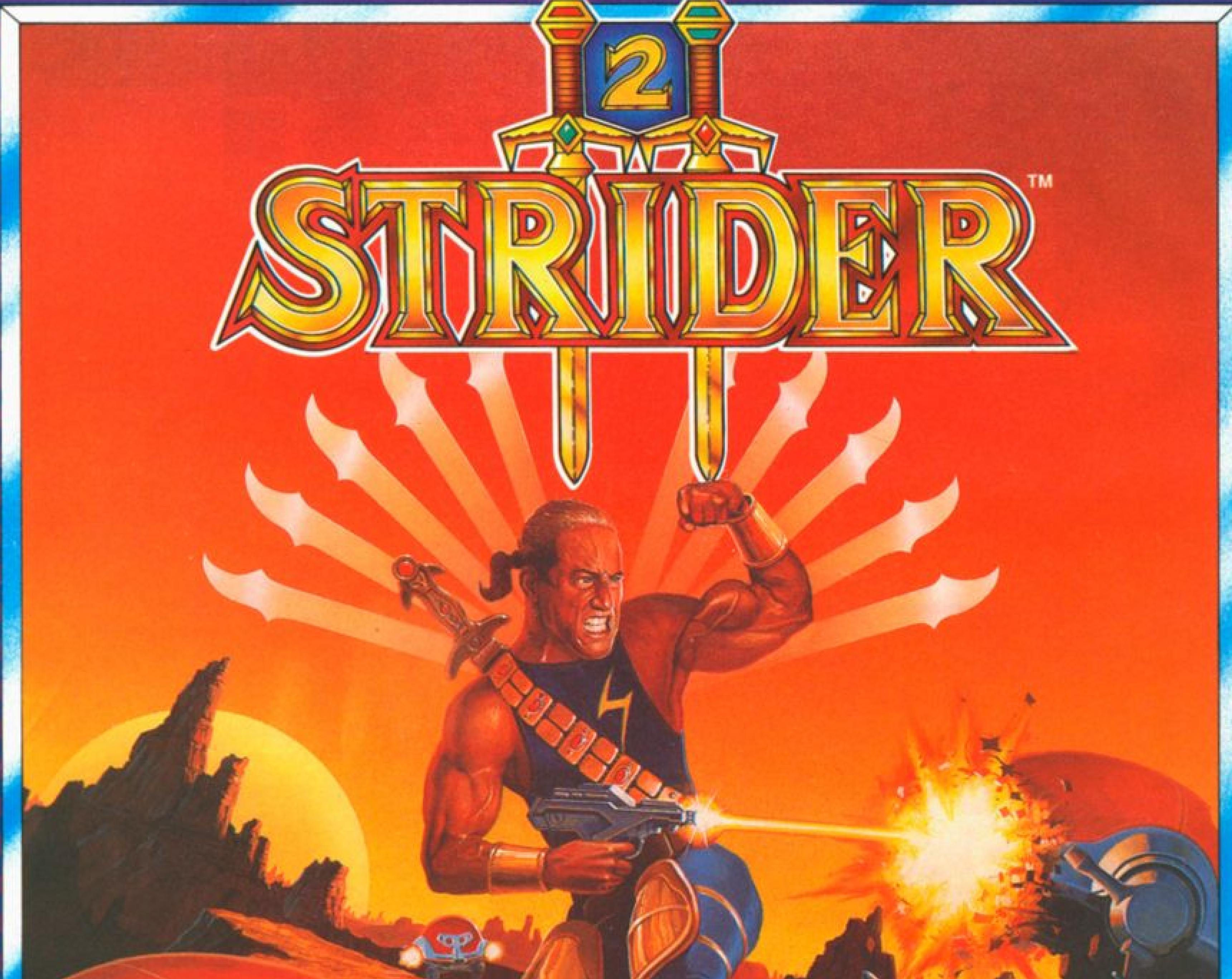
Technology and Entertainment Software has converted its popular 3D golf simulation onto Nintendo's Super Famicom. The game uses Polysys three-dimensional graphics routines and is licensed by Augusta National Golf Club. Technology and Entertainment Software was winner of the Login Global Award of 1990 at the European Computer Leisure Awards in April.

Fujitsu has developed the FM NoteBook – a portable, A4-sized, 2.5kg version of its FM Towns 32-bit computer.



Lucasfilm Games has upgraded its fantasy role-playing game Loom onto the FM Towns. Taking advantage of the Towns built-in CD-ROM drive the game incorporates CD-quality audio. Loom costs 8800 yen (around £35).

NO LIMITS ... NO MERCY ... NO SURRENDER!



The warrior returns with a vengeance in his ultimate fight for freedom. A flash of steel, a blast from his devastating Gyro Lazer Gun-Strider's back in action, pulverising the enemy and striving for justice. This time there will be NO LIMITS... NO MERCY... NO SURRENDER !

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Bold Strokes

Rik Haynes takes a look round last month's Computer Graphics show...

Held at London's Alexandra Palace exhibition centre, Computer Graphics is the UK's premier showcase for the latest innovations in digital art. This year was invaded by Virtual Reality with extensive conferences, hands-on demonstrations of VPL's dataglove and the launch of the world's first virtual reality arcade game (see page 18-20 for further details). With the ever-decreasing cost of silicon technologies, the level of visual excellence found in today's top graphics systems will find its way into home entertainment systems within the next five years.

Down In The Studio

Autodesk, the cyberspace exploring company, was showing its 3D Studio interactive graphics software package for creating high-quality three-dimensional still images and animations. "Based on bezier spline technology, Autodesk 3D Studio can be used to quickly produce realistic shapes that move with natural motion," explains Autodesk. "Anything from bouncing balls to complex robotic assemblies can be modelled, animated and rendered with flat, Gouraud or Phong shading. A built-in materials editor provides texture, bump, transparency and reflection mapping - even animated texture mapping." Autodesk 3D Studio is due to ship next year for £1750+VAT

This Amiga animation was created in just 40 minutes by Juha Meskanen using Real 3D

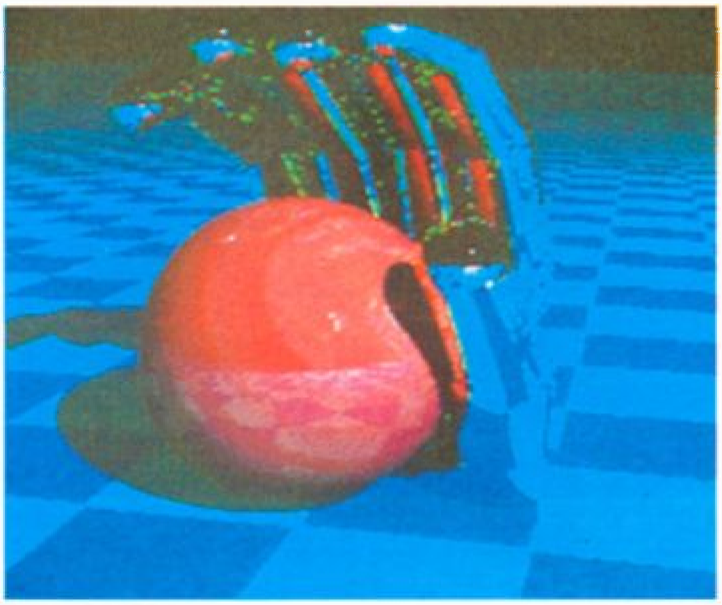
Harlequin Tears

Amiga Centre Scotland, the Amiga graphics specialist, launched an exciting new product at CG'90 for Commodore's low-cost graphics workhorse. The Harlequin 32-bit Frame Buffer is a 16 million colour graphics card for the Amiga 2000/3000 series. Harlequin is compatible with a wide range of accessories including genlocks, film recorders and video printers. Prices start at £1395 (ex VAT). Meanwhile, Amiga Centre Scotland describes Real 3D as the "fastest 3D ray-tracing program with animation and solid modelling on the market for Amiga Users". Real 3D is a 3D graphics program with animation for designing images, animation, presentations and technical design. It's a vector-based product with a hierarchical object-orientated construction method. Real 3D's images are correctly reproduced with all the right shadows, soft tones, reflections and light refraction.

The Red Arrows celebrated their 25th anniversary this year with this image which was created with the Vision 750 system from Applied Visual Technologies. No part of this image is a photograph - note the absence of pilots in the cockpits!

One For Digital Designers

Bournemouth Polytechnic currently runs two full-time courses teaching computer graphics and animation. The place is decked out with seven Silicon Graphics workstations and is developing a number of computer animation systems such as the Smallworld behavioral system interface and development system. Bournemouth Polytechnic is also researching a number of interesting projects including 3D textures of flames, clouds and foliage and fast free form deformations of polyhedral objects. Give them a call if you're interested in joining the gang.



Dimensional International are offering complete alternate realities for governments, museums, television and property developers. "You can walk, fly or drive through our environments at will," says DI. "As the Superscape virtual reality software calculates the 3D view up to 25 times per second, the experience is truly interactive with user inputs updated in real-time. It's just like being there!" Applications for DI's system - which is based around desktop PCs - include surrogate travel, simulation and sales presentations. Call 0734 810077 for further details

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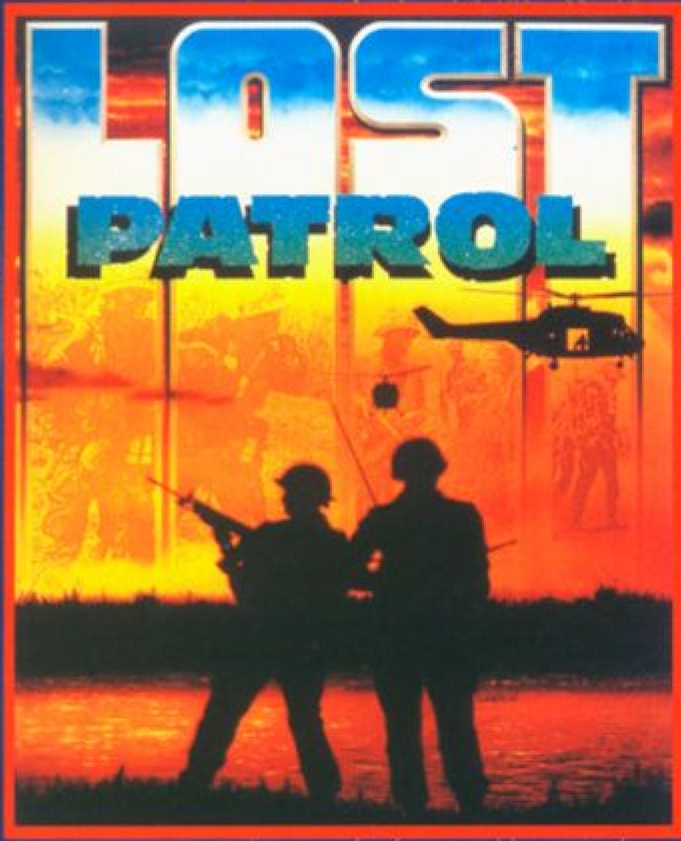
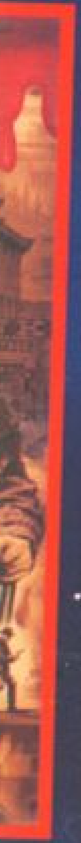


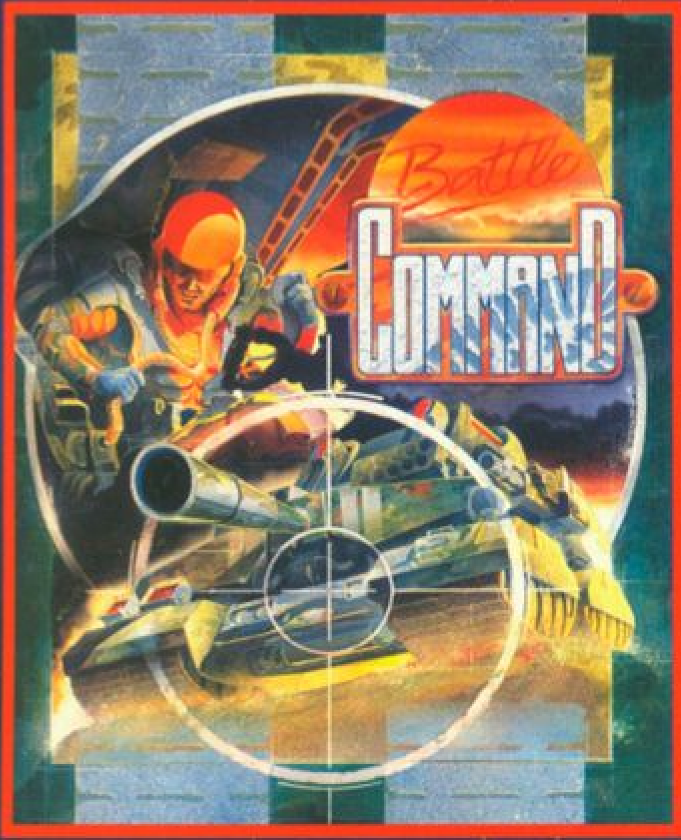
THE SKIES ARE YOUR HUNTING GROUND

The only flight simulation to provide 100, complex missions over four intense battle scenarios.
The only flight simulation to provide detailed daily war update reports.
The only flight simulation to present the latest in aerodynamic technology introducing ECOP cockpits, backwinder AAMS, supercruise, stealth and more!
F29 Retaliator is that flight simulation
F29 Retaliator presents the fastest and most detailed graphical environment ever seen in a flight simulation. With multiple internal and external viewpoints, multi-player comms option and a wide range of difficulty levels
F29 Retaliator will suit both the beginner and the expert pilot.
You have the choice of two of World's most advanced aircraft - the F-22 ATF and F-29.

WE'RE FIT, WE'RE ALIVE BUT WE'RE NOT BACK HOME

Our chopper tailed-out after taking a hit... the pilot won't be leaving the ground again. Now I have to lead my weary platoon back to our lines through the jungles and paddy fields. Entering what appears to be a friendly village, only to find it is a cover for a guerilla faction, is just one of the things that helps our insomnia... that and the elusive psycho in my squad - I gotta figure out who he is before the morale factor becomes our worst enemy. Jeez, will this stupid war never end!
Sensational graphics and a game-play that will have you sweating on the edge of your seat...every move you make, every decision you take may not only be the last for yourself but also for your platoon.

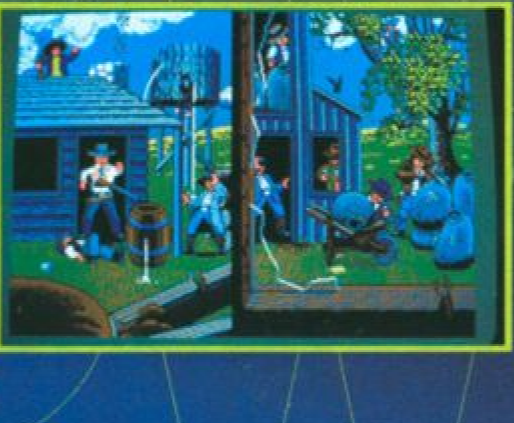


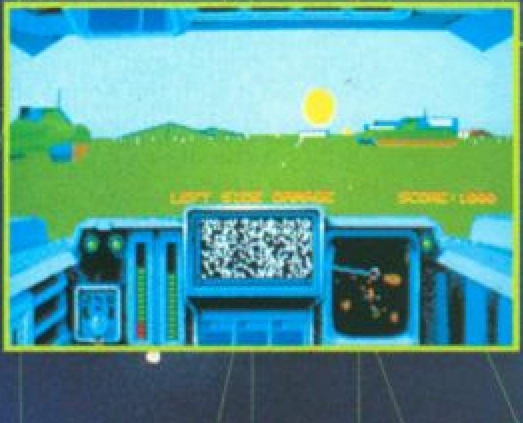


STRATEGY AND ARCADE ACTION for one or two players.
Take on the role of the desperado with a heart of gold; Billy himself, or his ex-best friend, sharp shooting, law abiding pillar of the community, Sheriff Pat Garrett.
As Billy you must survive by your wits. On arrival, check out the town, the men you think can help you, where the big games of poker take place, is the bank worth taking or is it going to be too hard to crack?
The other side of the coin is Pat Garrett. You must track down Billy using all your cunning. The payroll train is due to arrive...do you take all your deputies or leave some to keep an eye on the bank? And when you find Billy you will meet in the final showdown...now the guns do the talking!

FIRST INTO BATTLE... LAST TO LEAVE

Control the"Maular" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios in the ultra war, fought between two nations in the new World. The latest phase of the North/South war has reached a stalemate, eventually developing into a standoff between armies massed over a long, dug-in battlefront. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.





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Console Fury

Console aggro, computer aggro, adventure aggro, and a debate on economics....

GOBBLE GOBBLE

I am absolutely fed up with the way you are continually raving on about the Amiga CDTV. The way you go on about it, it's sickening. Personally I think it's a load of crap, even worse than CD-I, and makes no in-roads into true interactive games technology.

First, it doesn't have something that even CD-I can manage jerkily – Full Motion Video. Which means that all the TV quality screens are just digitised images. You won't be able to play them. At most they could only be 'hypertexted'.

Secondly, the interactive upgradability has been totally crippled by it being based on the Motorola Series 68000 processor. Although fine for ST's and Amiga's, it is totally inadequate for what is supposed to be an interactive graphics environment.

I am also afraid that your preaching of 4096 colour HAM games was for the worst. Even with all the custom chippery, there will be no way you realistically will be able to play a 4096 colour game in HAM mode.

All in all, the CDTV offers nothing new and is totally inferior to a Macintosh or PC with a CD+G CD-ROM drive without costing significantly less. The only place where it will be a success is in education, where on-line hypertext applications (like Dr Feelgood) come into their own.

If Commodore wanted to be really clever, it should have dug up the old Philips standard Laser Vision ROM and combined it with the Amiga to create the ultimate games machine.

But unfortunately Commodore has launched a turkey, and you - like an illiterate bystander - praise like hell without knowing anything.

Manu Kumar, London

Cor blimey, what a load of – forgive the expression – total gobblers. First, CD-I's approach to FMV is to incorporate it as a chipset – and they are delaying the launch to accomplish this. CDTV still has the option of adding either a chipset as a peripheral or, which now seems more likely, following a software solution. You're a bit behind the times, Manu – software compression technology DOES now promise a solution to the FMV problem.

Second, there is always the option to upgrade the 68000 processor, as has been done in the Mac range.

As for HAM games, I tend to agree with you, but the situation isn't as negative as you paint it. Games like 'Herewith the Clues', which were programmed using early CDTV development systems, are hardly indicative of what you can do with the machine.

To compare the CDTV (which, incidentally, also has CD+G capability) with the PC and Mac is ridiculous. The PC's processor set is no more powerful unless you buy an expensive high-profile model. DVI, the only PC FMV solution, is horrendously expensive. A system equivalent to the CDTV with CD+G, CD audio, and Amiga graphics/sound processing capability in either Mac or PC formats would cost you at least £2000.

You obviously don't know anything about games design. The Philips Laservision system is, frankly, rubbish when it comes to interactivity – for the simple reason that FMV is not particularly important in games design unless it offers full digital manipulation and processing on the fly, which Laservision doesn't and neither will any of the systems we're discussing here (for some time). It is also incompatible with CD audio, which is an important factor in future games design.

Finally, we never said that CDTV was new technology – what's new is the potential of the sum of its parts.

RANX AD PROTEST

I must come down heavily in favour of John Glover and agree entirely with him that far too much space is given to consoles and hand-helds etc. If I had wanted a console, I would have bought one instead of this expensive computer.

Whilst I'm on my high horse, I would like to protest about the Ranx advertisement in issue 39, page 61. Does no-one vet these ads or am I to assume that this is Okay by you?

I trust that you do not take offense at my objection as the same high moral standards (or higher) must apply here as they do to FAST and piracy.

Dave Newton, Bolton

Four pages of superb console reviews this month, and 29 pages of computer reviews, and you think we're giving consoles too much space!!? Let's get this straight – ACE's policy on consoles is to

OVER TO CONSOLE...

I've been playing computer games for almost five years now, having owned a C64, an ST, and now an Amiga, but sometimes I'm thinking of switching to a console. The reason is that I'm so often disappointed in the quality of current software.

In the old days of the C64 we took technical excellence for granted. Most, if not all games scrolled perfectly and had flicker-free animation. Not surprising, since every C64 game was tailor made for the machine.

Now five years later, that situation no longer applies. Since the Amiga and the ST share the same processor and the Amiga is perfectly able to display ST screen resolutions, modern programmers often code and design games that can be run on both machines without too much trouble. Rather than rewriting and finetuning routines for each machine, programmers go for the easy way out and the results often are technically mediocre and sometimes even terrible, written by people who are familiar with both machines but master of neither.

Now, with the enormous popularity of PC compatibles in the US the situation could deteriorate even further. What often happens is that the American PC games get converted for the UK machines using the EGA graphics. This is already the case with all Sierra and Lucasfilm games. Obviously these conversions hardly stretch the capabilities of your machine. The difference is especially telling when you compare these straight PC conversions with programs that were totally rewritten, like the Amiga version of Pirates and the 68000 versions of F19 Stealth Fighter.

Console games ought to be written from scratch for each machine just like the 8-bit games of yore. Such games won't be a compromise between 3 highly different computers but will use the machine to the fullest. However, I am afraid that British software houses will try to change that situation for a new machine that is getting a lot of attention these days, the Sega Megadrive. One of the reasons they are so enthusiastic is that the Megadrive has the same processor as the ST/Amiga and is perfectly able to display Atari graphics. It doesn't take a genius to guess what will happen.

Meanwhile I find it highly annoying that after five years (the Amiga was released in the fall of 85) many sometimes highly acclaimed programmers have still not mastered the basic functions of the machine. What about smooth scrolling, smooth animation, full European 320*256 resolution (instead of the American 320*200 resolution) and 32 colour screens instead of the 16 colour ST palette, not to mention such 'difficult to program' features like hard disk support, 1-Meg support, and multi-tasking. When we shell out almost £25 we deserve the best a programmer can do, not Amiga games with ST animation and PC graphics, ST games with PC graphics and animation, PC VGA games with ST graphics etc...

Ruud Van De Kruisweg, Amsterdam

Good point about the Megadrive, Ruud. It's always swings and roundabouts, though, isn't it? The 68000 processor means we'll get more games. We get more games, we get a greater proportion of rubbish. In the end, the answer is in your hands – it's your money they're after, and you decide how to spend it.

...AND BACK TO COMPUTER

About three months ago I sold my Amiga in order to buy a Sega Megadrive and I seriously advise all those thinking of doing the same to think twice. My reason for selling the Amiga was that I was constantly fed up with over-rated arcade conversions and I wanted quality software that used the machine properly. At first I really enjoyed the improved playability of the software, even if the graphic quality didn't match the Amiga (or still doesn't – compare Thunderforce 3 with Rainbow Art's forthcoming Z-Out). Then I started realising just how limited the majority of MD games really were and in gameplay terms what poor value they represented. I used to think 16-bit software was expensive, but if you're very selective, good lasting software can be found that beats console software hands down (eg Oldies like Fairy Tale Adventure and new games like Captive and The Immortal)

ACE is correct in stressing the need for both a computer and a console because a diet of arcade games alone can become very tedious. I bought Megadrive Strider and nearly finished it after a few hours. Unless console games get more involved with RPG and strategy elements (like Taito's Cadash), the future for machines like the Megadrive looks uninteresting and expensive.

I'm now saving up again for another Amiga! I hope people learn from my mistake. Consoles are a good complement for a home computer but a very poor substitute.

Matthew Brookes, Cheshire

Hard luck, Matthew. We've certainly never seen consoles as a replacement for computers – though some console owners seem to think they are. A keyboard remains essential for complex game interaction.

concentrate on exclusive coverage of the greatest games, not to flood the magazine with console trivia. That way console owners get the goodies, and so do you. And remember, in the end console software will become more sophisticated so that the truly discriminating gamester will have both a computer and a console (see this month's Prize Letter). Finally, we're sorry if the Ubisoft ad offended you. I personally don't find it offensive – God gave us hands and anything He created is OK by me...but I respect your attitude. Although sometimes film delivery schedules mean that we don't get to see all advertisements before press, we do our best to weed out unsuitable material. Remember, also, that ACE is a magazine for the older gamester.

COMPO RESULTS

Why did only UK readers get the chance to win free software and discounts in your competition in issue 38? I dialled the 0898 number from Germany several times but it didn't work. And the next issue arrived at the end of November, so I had no chance to send off my card in time.

Peter Gaydos, Wuppertal, W. Germany

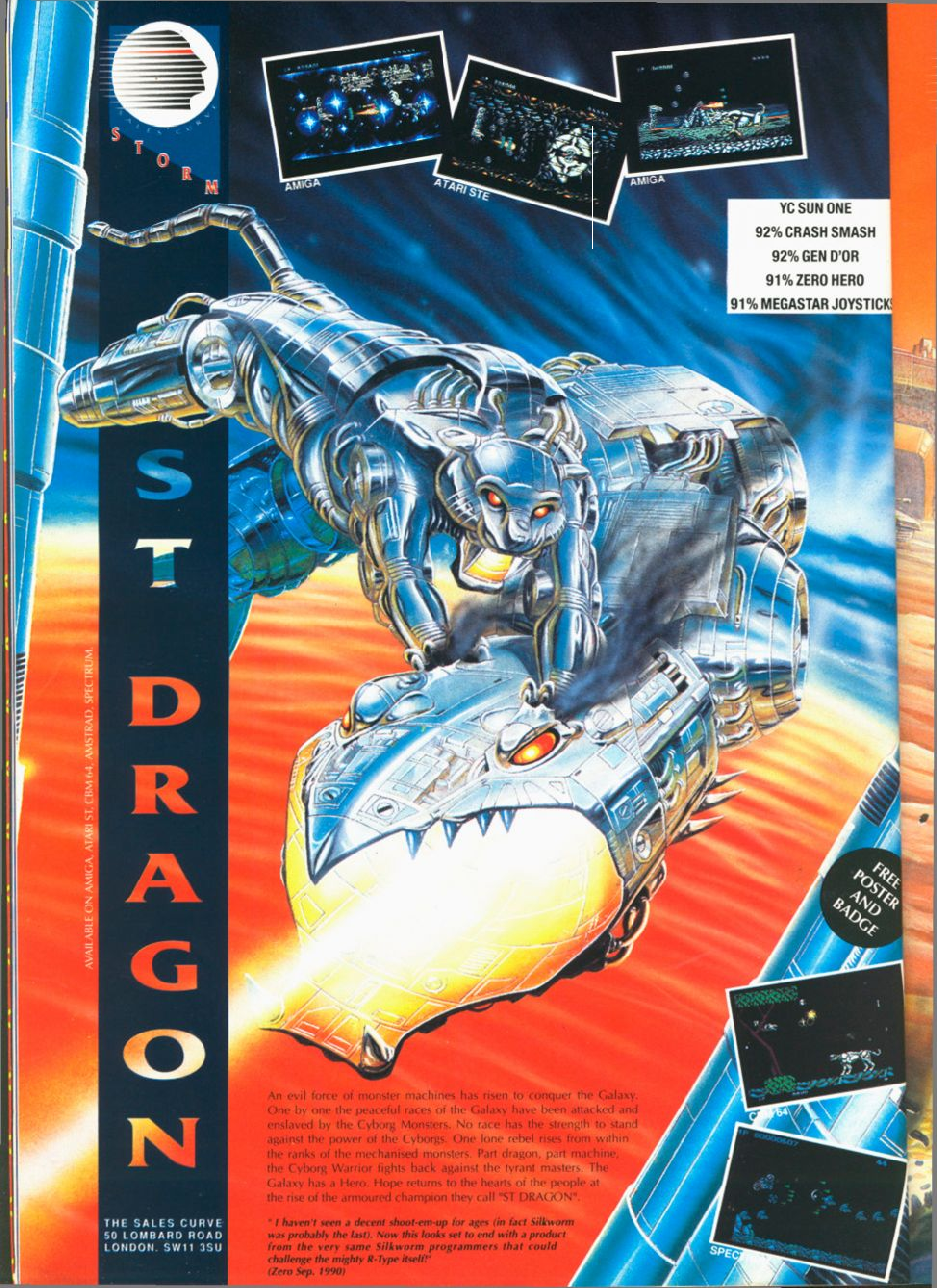
Sorry Peter, but most overseas territories received the next issue (with the contents of the numbers printed inside) well in time to enter the competition. We'll look into why West Germany was an exception.

ADVANCE CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT?

Why don't you change ACE's name to Advanced Console Entertainment – the way you're ranting on about 'the fabulous, brilliant, amazing Megadrive. You'd think the Amiga and the ST were dead.

Ian Goodchild, Northampton

The only people who think we're putting consoles first (which simply isn't true) are those with a secret fear that the consoles may be better than their computer. Which they're not. Relax, and continue to enjoy our coverage of ST, Amiga, PC, C64, Spectrum....and others.



YC SUN ONE
92% CRASH SMASH
92% GEN D'OR
91% ZERO HERO
91% MEGASTAR JOYSTICK

ST DRAGON

AVAILABLE ON AMIGA, ATARI ST, CBM 64, AMSTRAD, SPECTRUM.

An evil force of monster machines has risen to conquer the Galaxy. One by one the peaceful races of the Galaxy have been attacked and enslaved by the Cyborg Monsters. No race has the strength to stand against the power of the Cyborgs. One lone rebel rises from within the ranks of the mechanised monsters. Part dragon, part machine, the Cyborg Warrior fights back against the tyrant masters. The Galaxy has a Hero. Hope returns to the hearts of the people at the rise of the armoured champion they call "ST DRAGON".

"I haven't seen a decent shoot-em-up for ages (in fact Silkworm was probably the last). Now this looks set to end with a product from the very same Silkworm programmers that could challenge the mighty R-Type itself!"
(Zero Sep. 1990)

THE SALES CURVE
50 LOMBARD ROAD
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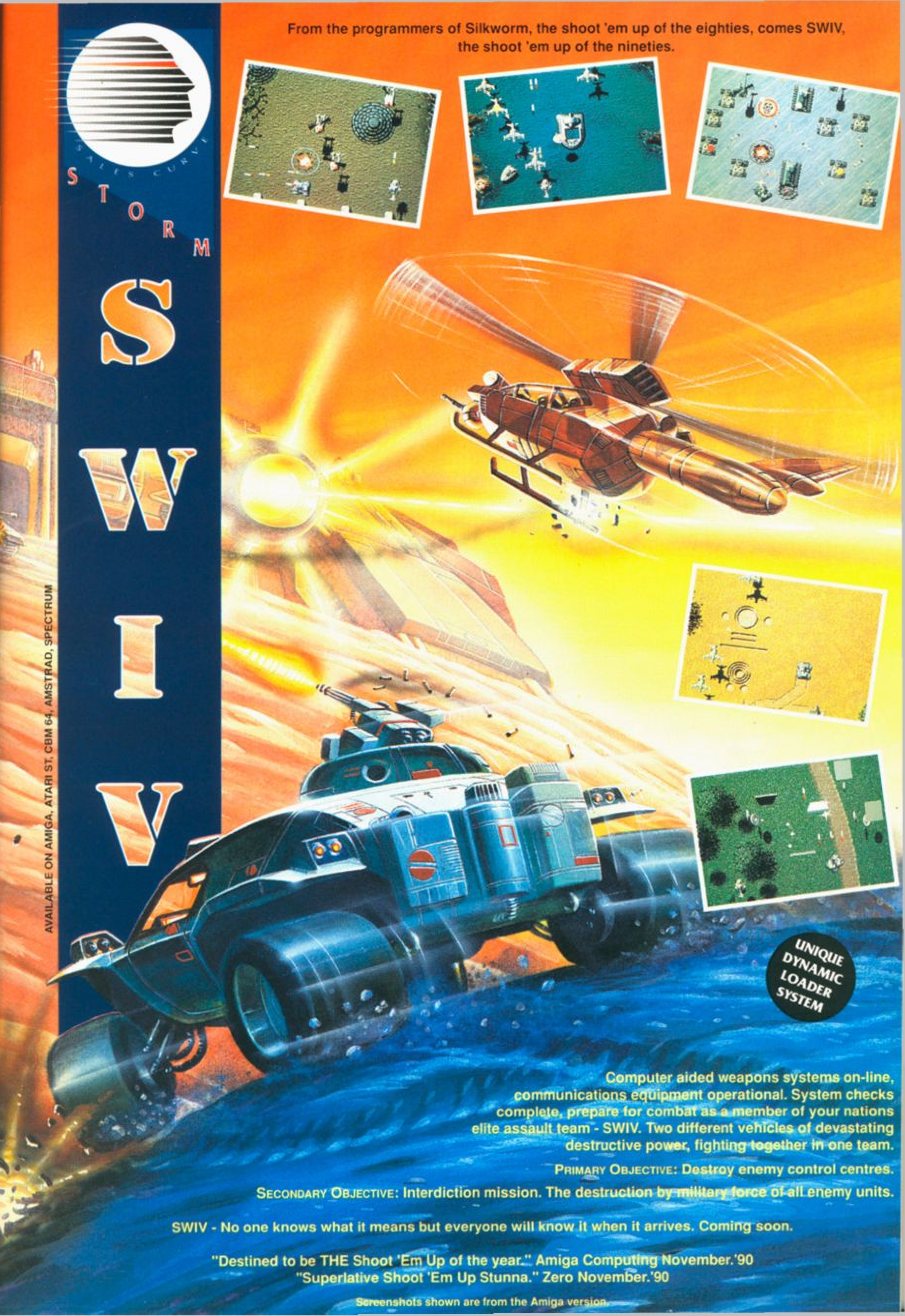
From the programmers of Silkworm, the shoot 'em up of the eighties, comes SWIV, the shoot 'em up of the nineties.



AVAILABLE ON AMIGA, ATARI ST, CBM 64, AMSTRAD, SPECTRUM

Computer aided weapons systems on-line, communications equipment operational. System checks complete, prepare for combat as a member of your nations elite assault team - SWIV. Two different vehicles of devastating destructive power, fighting together in one team.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: Destroy enemy control centres.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVE: Interdiction mission. The destruction by military force of all enemy units.

SWIV - No one knows what it means but everyone will know it when it arrives. Coming soon.

"Destined to be THE Shoot 'Em Up of the year." Amiga Computing November.'90
"Superlative Shoot 'Em Up Stunna." Zero November.'90

Screenshots shown are from the Amiga version.

Far out!

ACE is now committed to covering virtual reality technology in depth, in every issue. this month: a stunning British VR arcade machine and an interview with Jaron Lanier, VR guru from VPL, world leaders in cyberspace equipment design...

Oops! The overhead lighting defeated our photographer here, but this shot shows a screen running on the SD version. The environment running is a demonstration sequence taken from a 3D CAD package

Close up of the harness you need when using the SD version...

When the silicon seers sagely nodded their heads and said that, "one day all games will be written for virtual reality", we didn't expect that day to be Wednesday week and the place, Leicester rather than California.

Perhaps that's because, when it comes to VR, never have so many produced so much bullshit – in fact, at the New York Intertainment conference (see pages 29-31), wellies were issued as standard kit at the door (well almost) as Visionaries on Expenses waxed lyrical about the marvellous and the metaphysical.

'...Would VR reflect a circular consensus, hermeneutic orientation in future development and use, or follow a dialogical model, characterised by a critical interest in emancipation and liberation with emphasis on self-reflection?'

And all the time, in the heart of Leicester city centre, a small group of people were just getting on and doing it. VR, for real, for comparative peanuts.

It's not that W Industries, the company in question, can't roll out the concepts on cue – according to front man MD, Dr Jon Walden, the company is trying to, "open the bandwidth of dialogue," – but when that is said, the dewy eyed, soft focus, Utopia 2000 look is absent and he happens to be sitting next to a real VR product, "available from stock" that on a price/performance basis makes everything else in the field look 18th century.

STAND UP FOR WI

Called the Virtuality 1000 and produced in sit-down and stand-up versions (SD and SU), THE WI Industries' modular system has been engineered from sound basic principles to be both state-of-the-art and tough enough to stand up to the wear and tear of everyday use. As Jon says, "To do Virtual Reality is easy. To do a product to stand up in the Public Domain is difficult."

Virtual Reality easy? There speaks the understated confidence of someone who has been in the field almost before it existed. After a first degree in Design Engineering, Jon's interest in VR was initially triggered by, "how appalling CAD-CAM systems were, " and the frustration that, "ever since the Egyptians were drawing lines in sand to describe the Pyraminds, we've been using 2D constructs to describe 3D systems."

That was back in 1980. Influenced by a paper on real-time 3D graphics by James Clark – who went on to found high-end workstation producers Silicon Graphics – a doctorate on Virtual Reality followed.

Initial experiements were so successful that Racal lent him £500,000 worth of computer to produce a wire frame interactive VR 'room' that was presented as a breakthrough on Tomorrows World in 1985. Despite the obvious applications for such a system, amazingly the government research councils rejected further funding for the project.

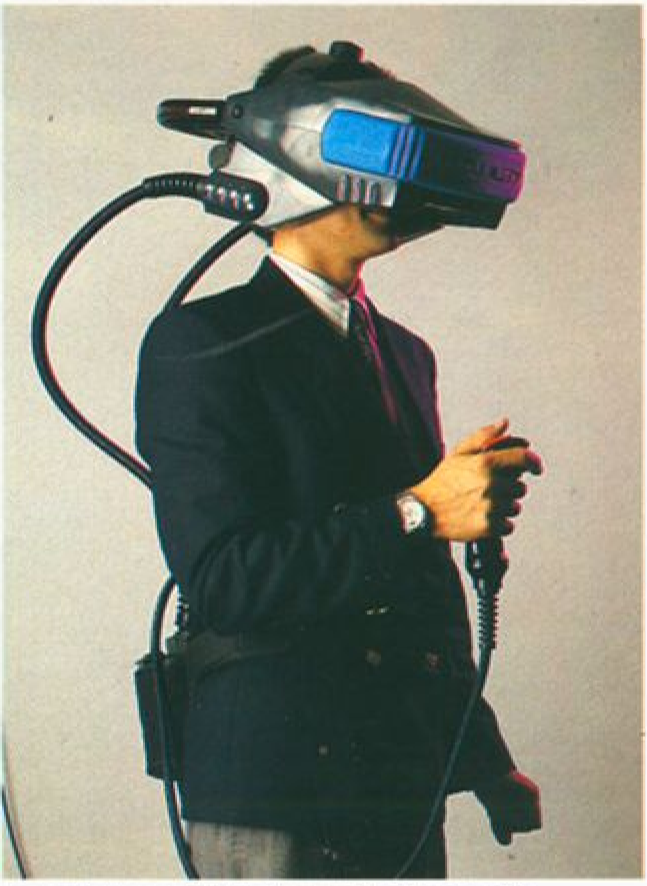
Undeterred by the establishment thumbs down, Jon went underground with the concept, holding down a job during the days but teaming together with 3 other key indi-

VIRTUAL JOB

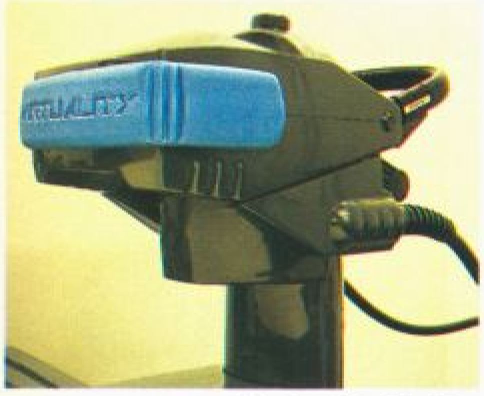
Want to be a part of team that's producing the new generation of games. W Industries is looking for people that, "eat, sleep and drink bits and bytes," to join its software team of, "high performance professionals."

Practical experience is preferred over and above paper qualifications, but you'll have to be highly proficient in C or Assembler to be considered.

Send in CV's, etc to W Industries at 26-28 Chancery Street, Leicester, LE1 5WD. And say ACE sent you (unless you're a twerp, in which case mention some other magazine, eh?).



Toys for the boys. Jon Walden disappears into silicon unreality



VTOL – you've lost the opposition (or they've lost you) during a frantic overfly of Virtual City

Watch out! It's unwise to practise low level flying over the hills. Stick to the open skies

viduals, Dr Al Humrich, Richard Holmes and Terry Rowley (now Directors of Software Engineering, Design and Production, and Simulation, respectively, at W Industries) in their spare time, working in a garage to produce a real VR product. The first consisted of 5 Amigas, running in parallel!

Forming W Industries in 1987 and funding themselves, two working systems were eventually produced – and won the British Technology Group's New Business award in '88. This, in turn, lead to offers of external funding (WI is now part owned by a major listed plc) and accelerated things to where they are today – the Virtuality 1000.

VIRTUALITY BUILT FOR ONE

Jon describes the Virtuality 1000 as, "a concatenation of known technologies," but there again, so was the invention of the motor car.

The unit, in both forms, is made up of three parts – Animette, the software that controls the show, Expality, the hardware it runs on, and Visette, the visor that delivers quad sound and stereo visuals to the user.

Expality is a custom designed multi-processor multimedia system that includes amongst others: the latest Texas Instruments floating point maths chip set that copes with 30,000 shaded and clipped polygons per second, the guts of an Amiga 3000 to cope with sound and some of the I/O, plus a CD Rom for both mass storage and CD sound.

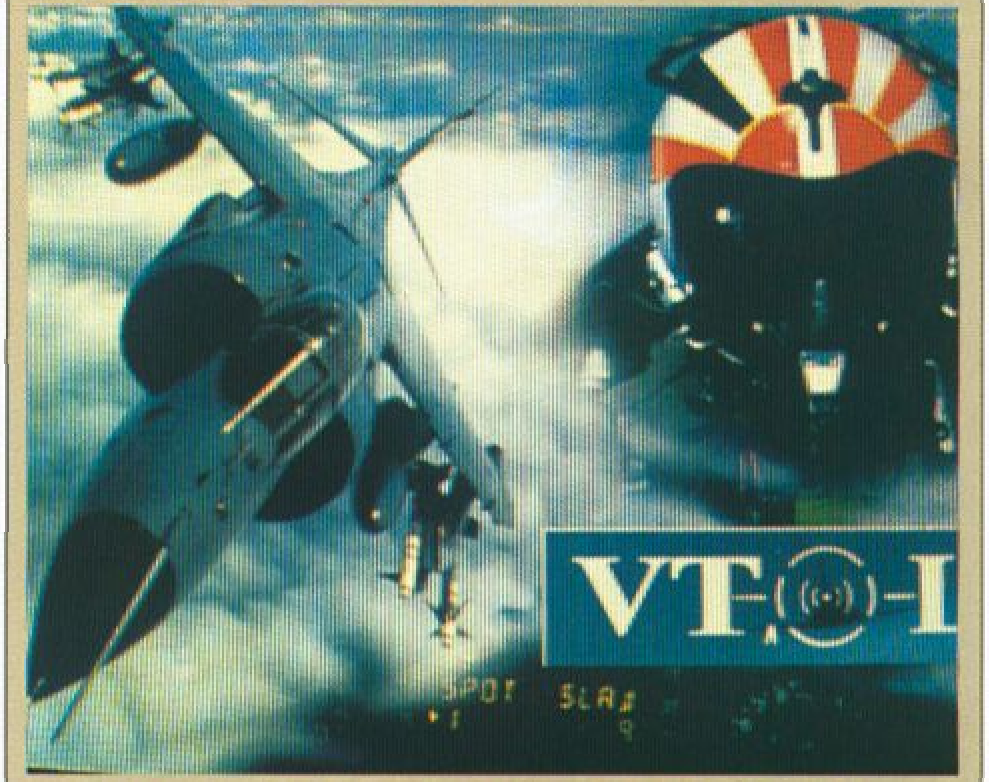
Driving this impressive hardware is the in-house authored operating system Animette that generates the visual, aural (and in the future, motion) cues from the virtual world, also allowing for up to 16 units to be connected together in the same 'world'.

Finally, Visette – the crash helment-like wrap around visor that uses two Thin Film Transistor monitors (60mm by 46mm with a resolution of 276x372) to produce a stunningly realistic stereo image, which thanks to the built-in magnetic tracking device, reacts to the movement of your head. Well, wouldn't you look around if it sounded like an enemy jet was 5 inches away from the back of your head? That particular effect is delivered by the quadrophonic sound system.

The price? Well, you could walk into the WI offices and take one away for under £20,000 today – but if you think that's a lot of money, bear in mind that a similar system from another company might cost you something over £125,000.

The £20,000 price tag brings in well into the price range from many commercial applications that CAD has revolutionised in the past decade. Design and Architecture, for instance. Design a building using a commercial CAD package – then load the file into Visette. Now you can 'walk' around and inside your structure to check it out for

THE GAMES

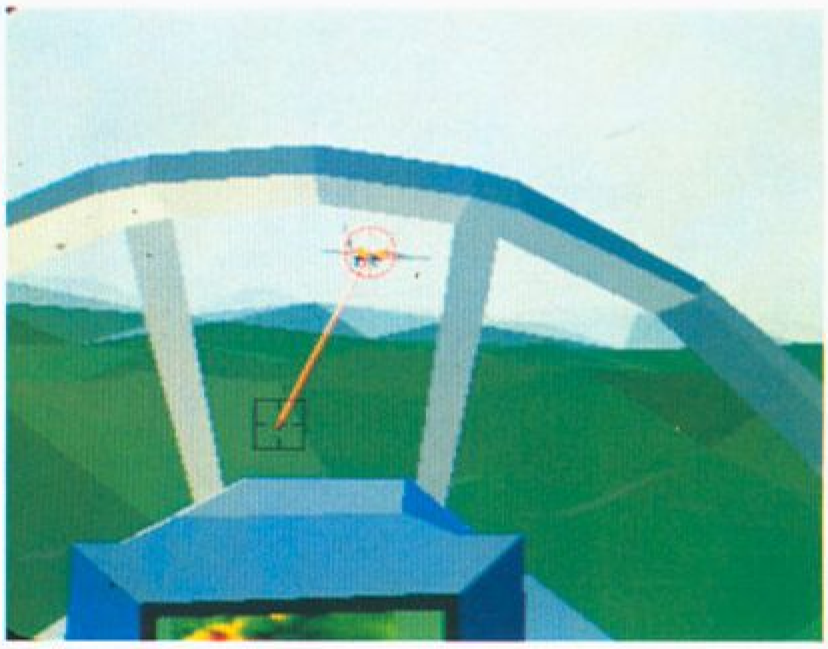


VTOL is the first game to be written for the Virtuality 1000 SD unit, and has you piloting a Harrier-like aircraft – along with up to 15 other playmates! You can check out the screenshots we took during our session elsewhere on these pages.

Controls are two joysticks, left and right, the left hand controling the vertical thrust and the throttle control, the right the movement of the plane and the firepower – cannon and Sidewinder missile.

In this game, kills qualify you to refuel – via mid-air tanker to begin with – and therefore stay up in the air. Later on in the game, you'll have to land on a Carrier to re-arm – not easy. Winner stays on, if you're playing in a group.

The stereoscopic vision looks astonishing as you zoom over the complex fractal generated landscape with afterburner full on. But it's the feeling of being totally immersed within the game that makes it quite unlike anything else you've ever played!

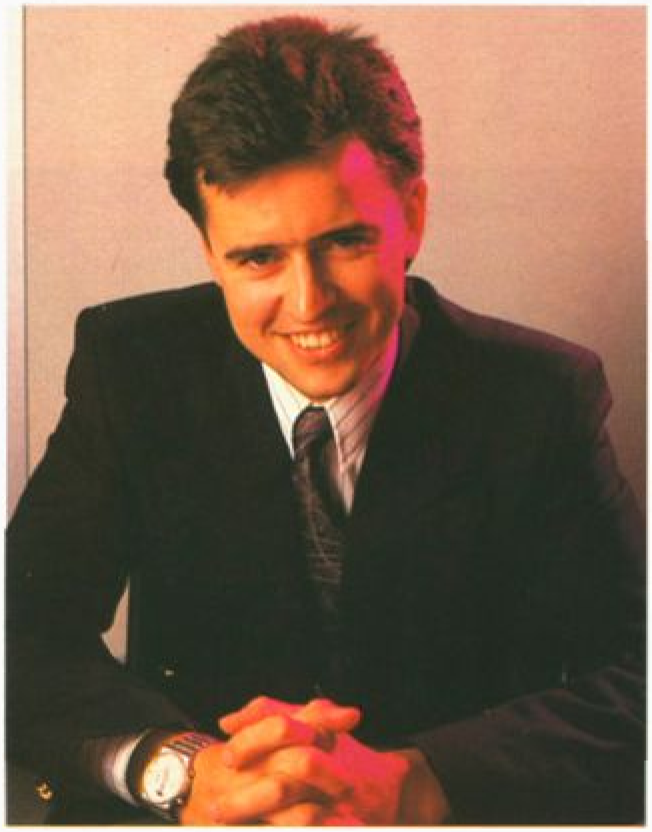


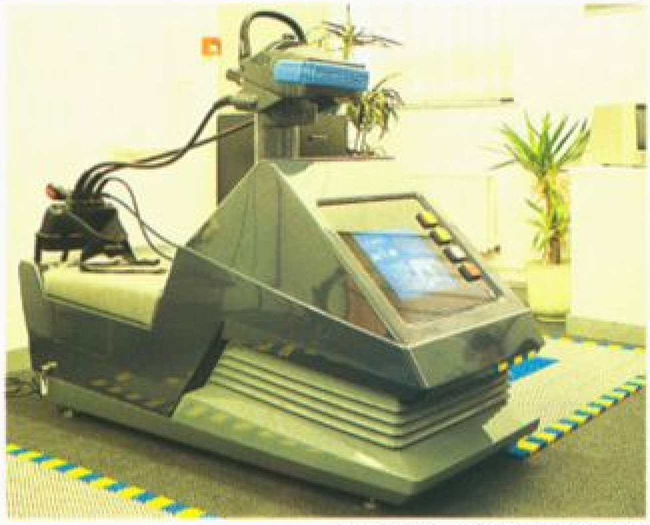
Lock on target! Stereo sound enhances the excitement of the chase

Heading out to sea. Just as well it's only virtual water down there

A quick fly past the aerodrome. Make sure you can find your way back!

Dr Jon Walden, MD of WI Industries. 'This system is available from stock...!'





The arcade unit in all its glory – the screen on the front enables spectators to share in the action

glitches, before the first brick has been laid!

But it sounds like Jon's favourite use for Virtuality is one you're probably familiar with – Entertainment! He describes games programming as "the most demanding application," and aims to build WI into "the Paramount Studios of Computer Entertainment." There is already a suite of 4 games, or "experiences" written, one of which will be on Beta test in an arcade, "somewhere in England", by the time you read this and will be in full distribution by next year.

The four comprise a VTOL fighter combat game, a race on hover-bikes through a future forest of trees, a bob sleigh game and space game, using Shuttle-style Orbital Vehicular units.

Played sitting in the SD unit, and networked (so you can get a whole bunch of you flying a squadron of Harriers if you so wish!), the controls are a pair of military spec proportional joysticks, one for either hand, with two fire buttons on each.

Ye Gods! It's true – they really ARE available from stock! And they work! Is this a first for British technology??

HANDS ON, HEAD IN

Of course, the trouble with a VR experience is that the true feeling of it has to be aquired, 'hands-on'. But one thing is for sure – once you've played VR games, you won't want to go back to a flat screen.

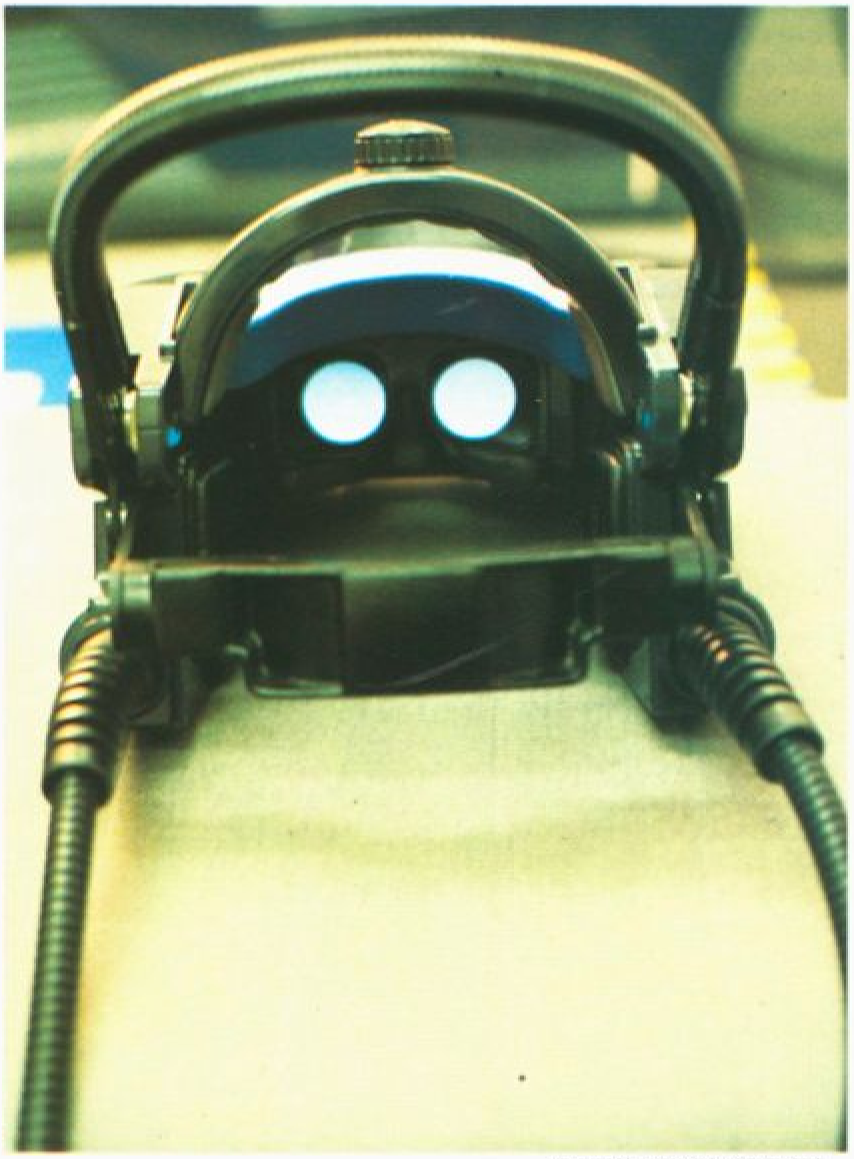
Once the visor is on and the engine noise fills your ears, you are completely immersed in a real world that reacts to your every movement. Add this to the interactivity of having several friends along – either in competition or co-operation – and you have a unique computer gaming experience. A genuine feeling of 'being there.'

There's a certain amount of future shock involved too. I mean, when all the guys in New York were sagely nodding their heads and saying that, "one day all games will be written for virtual reality", I didn't expect that day to be Wednesday week and the place, Leicester rather than La Jolla.

The future? The Virtuality system has been designed to slot in new components as the chips become more powerful which in turn will allow even greater realism in the model, such as surface texture mapping. And WI has enough goodies in development to keep the surprises coming – how about a VR toolkit, including a chisel, for VR sculpture?

"We're at the Wright Brothers stage now," says Dr Waldern, "but it won't take 100 years to get to Concorde, more like 10".

But Jon feels that it's future applications – probably now unknown – that will prove to be the full blossoming of VR. WI have provided the platform – now it's up to the innovators, maybe you, to make best use if it.



The goggles use twin displays of remarkable clarity to generate stereoscopic views – and you get stereo sound as well

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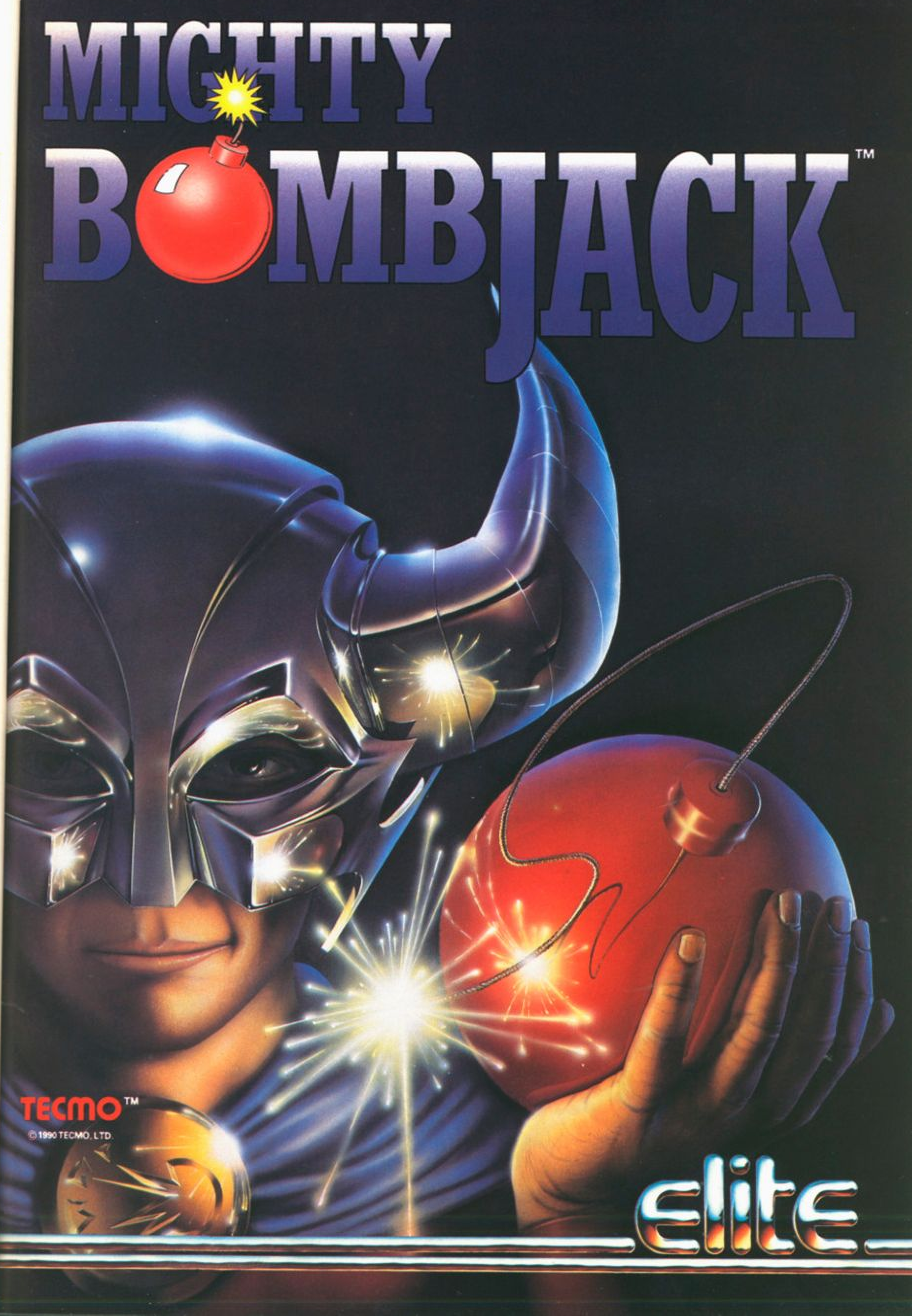
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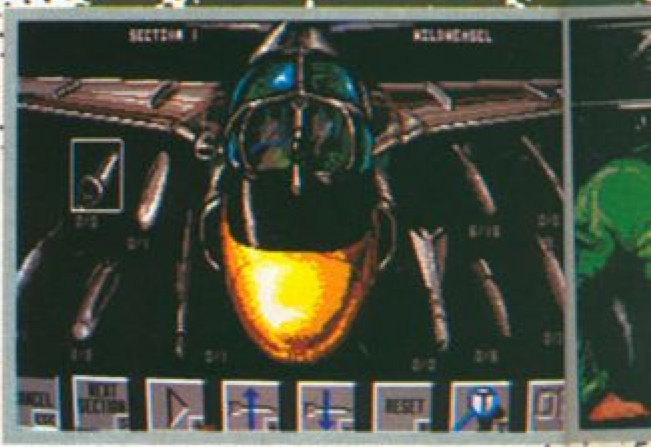

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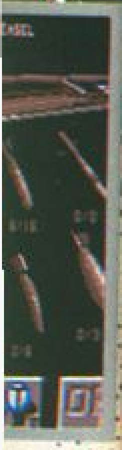

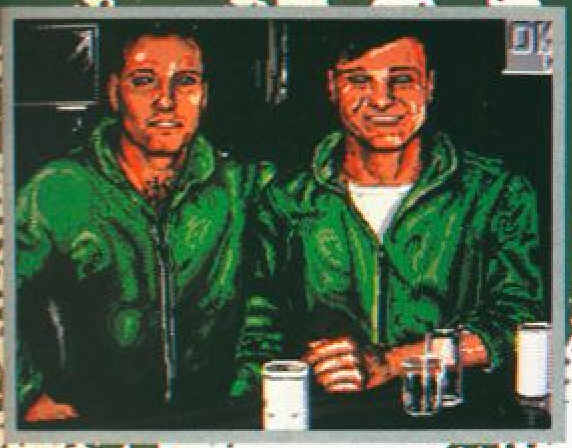

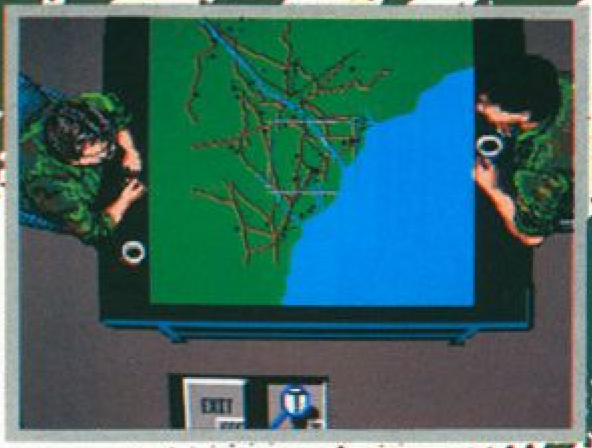

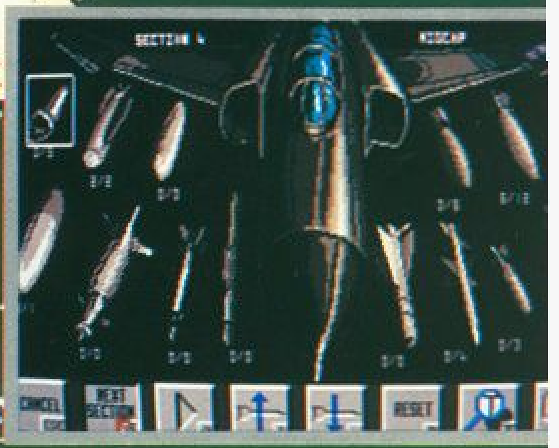

FEATURES

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BY THE AUTHORS OF FALCON

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Gold Digging

ACE readers visited US Gold for the latest ACE Conference and a whole heap of monkey business...

The Code Monkeys, sweating it out in costume: (l/r) Mark Kirkby, Colin Hogg, and Eliot Gay

Th boy! We expected the fur to fly at the US Gold Conference, but we didn't expect it to be frisking around the office telling us how to program *Mean Streets*!

It was, of course, those pesky Code Monkeys who were responsible. They gambolled into the office like identical triplets whose Dad had escaped from the Jungle Book and done something unmentionable in the Hamley's Soft Toy Department. Then off came the heads to reveal the sweaty, tousled, and sheepish grins of Mark Kirkby, Colin Hogg, and Eliot Gay, who together had just finished coding the UK versions of *Mean Streets* (rated 837 in ACE 38).

'You can make a decent living out of games,' said Colin encouragingly as ACE reader Salim Fadhley admitted to a secret desire to turn programmer. In fact, the lads had it slightly easier than usual with *Mean Streets* because '....Access (the US originators) supplied all the source code – and it was very well commented.' Talking of taking it easy, the Monkeys were also enthusiastic about console programming: '...they're designed for games. Tons of sprites, hardware assisted scrolling. The Amiga comes the closest, but the 16-bit consoles are really tremendous games machines.'

Looking further ahead, the Code Monkeys were not quite so enthusiastic about CD development. 'It took us six months to write *Mean Streets*,' pointed out Elliot. 'Now think of all the data space on a CD. How long do you think it's going to take to do that medium justice? And it's going to cost a lot of money...'

To cope with a tight schedule, the Monkeys then had to be lured out of the office with a bunch of bananas and in came John Dale and Andy Beveridge of The Assembly Line. This team, previously responsible for the excellent *Vaxine* amongst other titles, are currently working on Cybercom III, due out from USG next year.

'This program started out as a big game...but unfortunately it got even bigger! We're up against memory problems already – there's an options selection wheel on-screen, for example, that uses 30K just for the sprites used in rotating it.'

Cybercon III pits you against a vast computer of the same name which has run amok and, instead of defending the Earth in Star Wars fashion, has decided to give it a good drubbing instead. Years later only a handful of humans remain alive and in a last ditch bid for survival you must penetrate the computer complex and put it out of action. Some early sequences from the program were demonstrated at the Conference and looked very impressive indeed, boasting a combination of arcade and exploration skills within some superb 3D environments.

Cybercon III got the thumbs up from almost everyone at the Conference – let's hope it hits the streets soon. And in the meantime, very many thanks to everyone at USG for putting up with us, feeding us, festooning us with freebies, and giving us some of the best games around. Check out the Screentest section (in particular pages 54/55) for more Golden goodies.

Michael Hussey– a previous Conference attendee who managed to fill one of the cancellations

Dale Wilks – thought the chap in *Mean Streets* had a wooden leg. Ahem, Dale, that's state of the art animation for you!

Simon Parfrement – impressed by the speed of *Vaxine*

Salim Fadhley – had designs on becoming a programmer

Julian Ware – *kept a low profile during the conference but managed to escape with goodies for his Amiga 500*

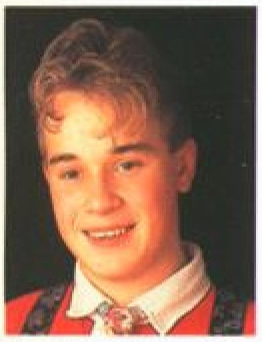
Ferdina Devi – just managed to make it to the Conference before leaving the UK forever!

James Verdier – liked the game design of *Mean Streets* and was impressed by the fast scrolling on *Vaxine*

The Assembly Line reps: John Dale (right) and Andy Beveridge. One subject the duo were pretty forthright about was CDTV: 'We can foresee problems with that one. People think there will be lots of old Amiga titles being converted for it, but most Amiga games throw the operating system right out. However, on CDTV, if you want to use the builit-in CD, you'll almost certainly need the OS. So for many games, people will have to go back and completely rewrite them.'

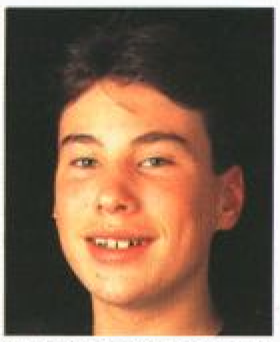
Ferdina Devi had the honour of being the first girl to attend an ACE Conference. Let's hope she starts a trend. Meanwhile, here are the other ACE Readers who took train, plane, and automobile to share a few Golden moments in Birmingham...

Anil Khedun – planning to be an ACE author

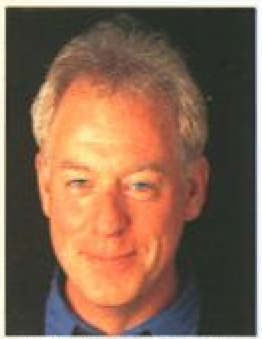


Adrian Clinton-Watkins – not so keen on 3D games – preferred shoot-em-ups, but liked the variety of gameplay in *Mean Streets*

David Ng – attended the Mirrorsoft conference, but managed to slip in again to fill a gap due to a cancellation

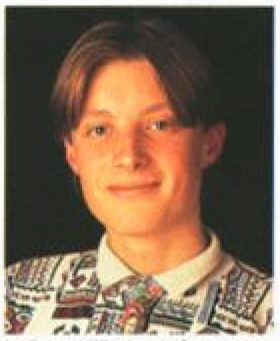


Martin Sommerville – wanted to become a grphic artist – and fancied both *Cybercon* and *Vaxine*



Dicon Peeke – had a few suggestions for saving memory in *Mean Streets*

J Singh– sorry, JS, we missed out on your first name. But we know you fancied *UN Squadron*...



Andrew Williams – 'a few more animation frames on the digitised faceshots in *Mean Streets* would have made a difference...'

Jody Kirk – particularly impressed by *Cybercon III*

Grant Sellers – a loyal *Ghouls and Ghosts* fan

SOLID GOLD!

Each month, we'll let you know about forthcoming conferences around the country. If you think you might be interested in attending one, all you have to do is send us a postcard with your name and address clearly written, together with a daytime telephone number if at all possible. You also need to tell us:

- Which conference you would like to attend. If you're applying for more than one, put them in order of preference. If no conference is listed for the software house you'd like to visit, put the software house's name down and we'll put you on the list for that conference when (and if) it is organised in the future.
- The machine you own, so that we can make sure you get some juicy free gifts for your micro!
- Your age, so that we can ensure a good spread of age groups at each conference.
- If you are a subscriber, send your application in an envelope together with the address panel from the last issue of ACE that you were sent.

Obviously we have to limit the number of people attending each conference to a maximum of 15. In addition, we have to make a nominal charge of £5.00 to help cover costs. All places are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Subscribers, however, get priority allocations for the first five places in each conference, and they may also attend free of charge. Phone 0858 410510 for subscription details.

A couple of weeks before each conference, we'll select the lucky readers from those who have applied and inform them of the relevant details. If anyone can't attend, they'll be shortlisted for a future conference and another selection will be made for someone who can take their place. Please note: all conference attendees are responsible for making their own way to the conference venue. Obviously we'll help wherever possible with lifts and taxis etc, but we can't make any promises. Bear the location of each conference in mind when you apply. If you're planning to use public transport, bear in mind that sessions start at 12.30pm.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Ocean: in **February 1991,** location: **Manchester.**
Gremlin: in **March 1991,** location: **Sheffield.**
Exact dates for these will be announced together with further details in the **next issue,** but ***don't delay*** – get your applications in **NOW!!**

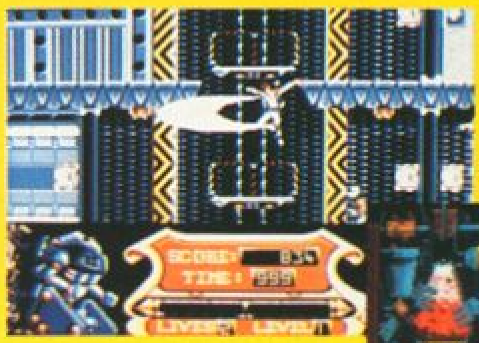
I say, I say, girls, steady on! The hostess with the mostest (that's Danielle 'Woody' Woodyatt on the left) and Nicola Whitehead (nominated Miss Software UK by the ACE Editor) put the pressure on Development Manager Steve Fitton to continue producing ACE rated products. If the reward for failure is being manhandled by these two, then carry on missing deadlines, Steve...

US GOLD

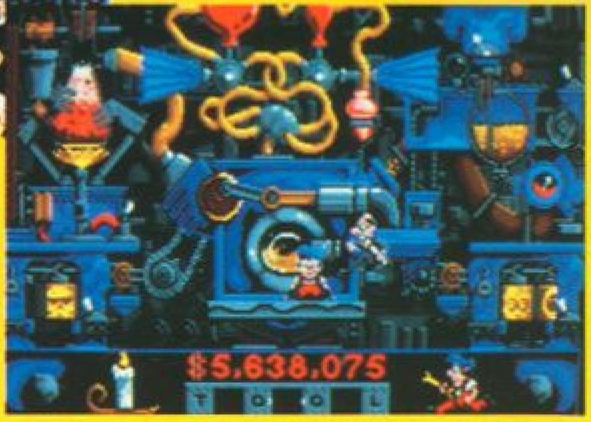
Britain's biggest games powerhouse started life in 1984. By 1987 they were producing more than one in three of all games sold in the UK. Check out their latest hits on pages 54/55.

STRIDER II

Just one of the products coming up from USG, *Strider II* is set to follow on from the ACE-rated original in a clash of steel and a flash of laser fury. Watch out for it in the next week or two on C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, ST, and Amiga



Strider II



***Nightshift* from Lucasfilm marks a departure for the company from their usual graphic adventure style (*Loom*, *Monkey Island* etc). Coming soon for PC owners, it's a classic action puzzler as you attempt to fulfill production quotas during the nightshift, tending a vast machine that recycles rubbish and churns out mini-toys based on Lucasfilm characters**

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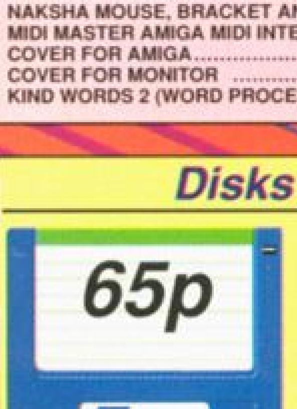

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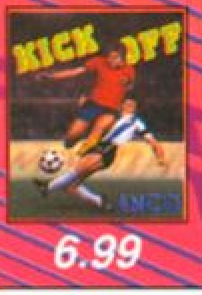

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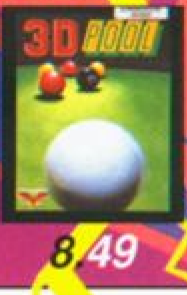

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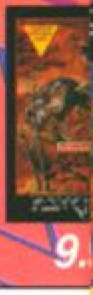

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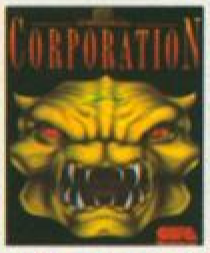

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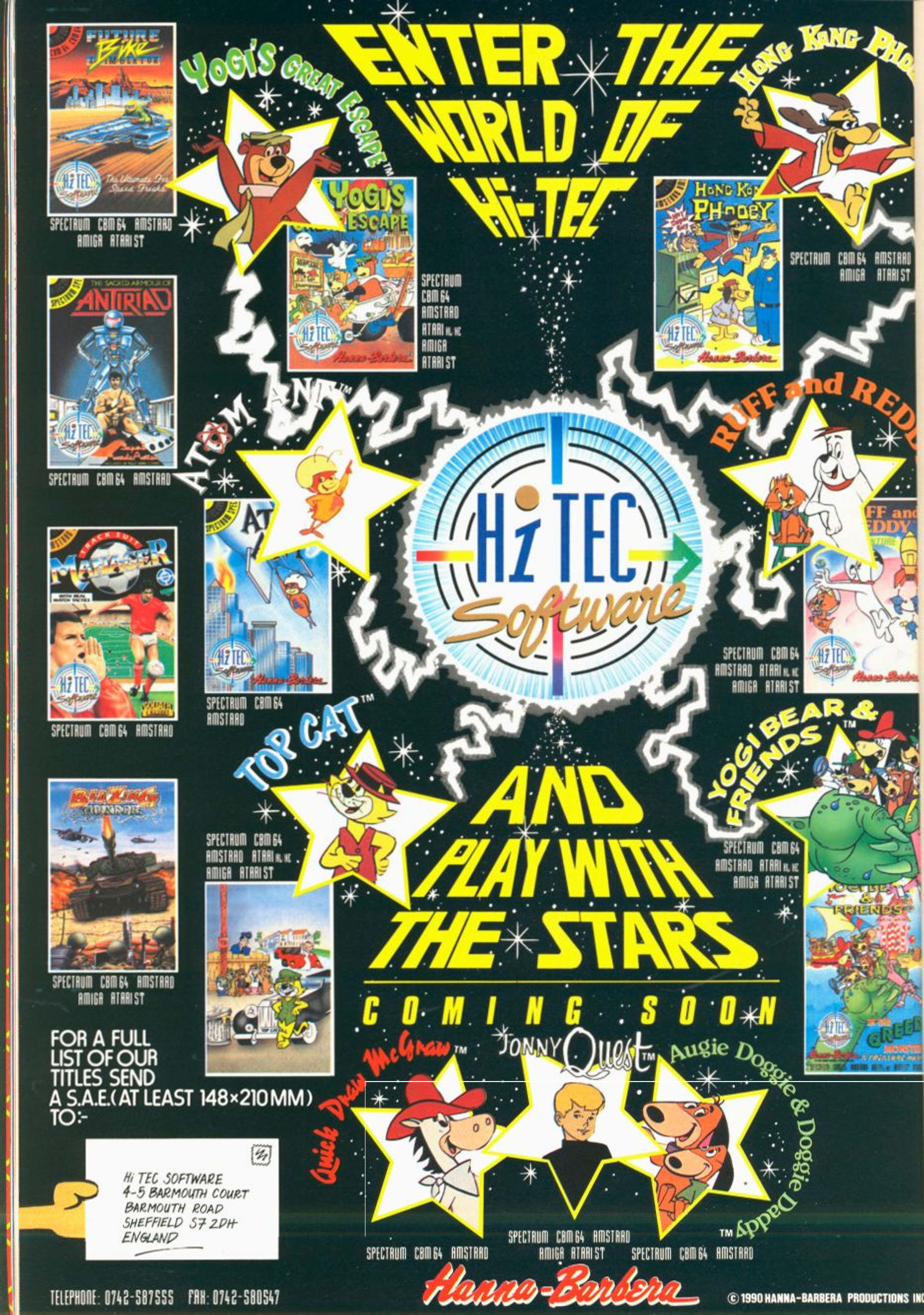

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That's Intertainment...

Virtual reality, advanced game design, hyperfiction, interactive cinema – if it's interactive, it happened at Intertainment '90 in New York. ACE was there...and here's the first instalment of our two part report

Times Square, times change. Broadway theatres once ruled supreme, but in November 1990 the star turns were definitely off-Broadway – very far off Broadway indeed. The y were 'In There' – and that, in case you've been dozing in the Bingo hall for the last few months – means in virtual reality, a world of shifting co-ordinates, bit-block transfers, stereoscopic displays, and vector landscapes.

But Intertainment '90 was about far more than inner cyberspace. Game design gurus gathered from around the world, hard-nosed businessmen fenced with each other over multi-million dollar amusement park contracts, and university professors debated the nuances of hyperfiction. The only thing that seemed to be missing was hardware – CD technology, which everyone expected to see showing off its full-motion video, stereo sound capabilities, seemed instead to have slipped into some virtual reality all of its own. And no-one, apparently, knows exactly when it's going to come out.

On these three pages we've given you just a taste of what went on, what went off, and what went wrong. In no particular order...just the way it emerged from 'In There'...and we'll bringing you further coverage next month of the Hyperfiction and Virtual Reality sessions.

Mandala Interactive
Virtual World Systems

Vincent John Vincent showing off his Mandala system: 'an interactive virtual-world technology that can take anyone on a creative, interactive journey into worlds that exist only within the computer'. The performer/spectator stands behind a monitor in an area scanned by sensors. These pick up his image and movements and merge these images with the software running on the computer, creating the sensation of being 'In There' but without all the cumbersome equipment. Jaron Lanier (see page 19/20) calls this approach 'Virtual reality's sister technology'

VIRTUAL BALLS

'It's the world's first virtual ball!' declared Rich Gold, manager of Mattel's Powerglove project (see also elsewhere in this article). He was talking about *Super Gloveball*, a new Nintendo game programmed by Rare using the Powerglove. Imagine the old *Break Out* games – now imagine seeing your gloved hand on-screen. Now, if you can, imagine the on-screen fingers flexing and spreading as you move your own hand. And finally, imagine your hand moving to and fro across the screen as you move your limb in reality. The fun really starts, however, as you get accustomed to catching, holding, carrying, spinning, and throwing that virtual ball. Yay!

PC MEGADRIVE

Darkly hinted at in the Japanese computer press and confirmed at the Intertainment conference by Sega's US president Michael Katz, the Terra PC is now officially a reality. Only problem is, the release dates, prices, and distribution remain a mystery.

The Terra PC is a very simple idea, but a truly excellent one for anyone who wants to combine work and play. It's a PC with Sega Megadrive circuitry built into the motherboard. So you can load up Lotus 1-2-3 and, when time or absence of boss allows, flip over to your latest games cart at the touch of a switch. Let us at 'em!

CD – THE SHAME OF THE GAME

So what the h*ll *is* happening with CD then? After years of gab, we'd be forgiven for expecting at least one CD games system to be on the market, but the CD gurus gathered at New York were still promising us jam tomorrow...

The jam, however, does seem a little fruitier these days. First, Dick Arroyo of AIM (see ACE issue 32) made a major commitment to giving us a CD-I full-motion video system 'within 300 days'. Aha! By our calculations that means September 1st, 1991. And complete with full-motion, too, eh? And – he promised – under $1000. Depending on exchange rates, that leaves Philips and Sony the option of undercutting the price of CDTV when they bring out their own system – and FMV would give them a major marketing advantage over the Commodore machine.

So, a quick question to Nolan Bushnell, currently in charge of CDTV development at Commodore. Would Commodore be delivering the FMV capability (either in-built or as an add-on) for CDTV that a company spokesperson had strongly hinted at when we researched our exclusive coverage of the machine in ACE 34?

'Well,' replied the man himself, 'it's amazing how far they've come with software decompression systems. I wouldn't be surprised if we had a software system that could give us FMV capability by the end of 1991.'

The extraordinary thing is that the man could be right. Software compression technology IS developing at an

PC, AMIGA AND ST POWERGLOVES?

The Powerglove – the most popular add-on in the States for the Nintendo system – shortly to be made available for the PC and possibly other machines as well.

To date, PC owners have been unable to get a Powerglove – unless they wanted to pay around $8000 for a professional model from one of the big cyberspace companies. Mattel themselves weren't interested in doing a PC version and hence did not take up the PC option when they licensed the technology from original developers VPL. However, the success of the unit has spurred VPL to get other deals on the table and it's now certain that a PC Powerglove is on the way. No-one's entirely sure where it's coming from but Logitech is the name being whispered.

The PC version of the Powerglove opens the ball-game up again to other hardware developers, so we can be fairly certain of seeing Dataglove technology implemented on other 16-bit machines in the near future. Watch this space.

'Close your eyes. I know that's a problem here in New York, but hotel security assure me that you won't get mugged.'
Intertainment lecturer on virtual reality, referring to harsh reality

unprecedented rate. If someone comes up with a bundle of algorithms that can do for the price of a few bytes of storage what Philips and DVI are doing with expensive chip sets, then there are going to be some very sick parrots around.

'Don't forget – a few years back someone went to people in the music industry and said, more or less, 'I want you to take a Bon Jovi disk that isn't really selling very well and put it on a completely incompatible shiny disk that the customer can only use if he pays $1200.' Most people said 'Get out!' – but a few went ahead...and created the biggest market revolution ever in their industry, CD audio. And we're going to create as big a revolution with CD-I.'
Dick Arroyo, AIM

No-one at the conference denied that CD was the entertainment medium of the future, but when it comes to jam tomorrow, the attendees were understandably more interested in virtual reality (which is jam next century) than in the stale news of compact disk. Sadly, CD-I was demonstrated only in prototype form and CDTV – well, the less said the better. When Nolan Bushnell mounted the stage to show the system off, it insisted on crashing continuously. On that basis it was something of a relief to hear that its launch was to be delayed until Spring '91.

At the end of the day, perhaps the most impressive CD product was Empruve's Cornucopia machine because (a) it worked and (b) it showed just how this technology could change the machines we use and what we get from them. Check it out on page 111 of this issue.

INTERPLAY GET FUR BETWEEN THE TOES

The company that brought you *The Bards Tale* and Wasteland have now announced a new version of Lord of the Rings. Brave chaps.

Brave, because attempts to squeeze this into silicon – or indeed into any medium other than ink and paper – have hitherto been disastrous. Melbourne House struck lucky with *The Hobbit*, but they sure struck out with *The Lord of The Rings* graphic adventure that came after it. And as for the full length cartoon experience, well...the less said in a cutey voice with big goo-goo eyes and appalling animation the better.

Danny McCall, president of Empruve, the developers of the very sexy Cornucopia DVI system. See page 111 for more details

Interplay, however, reckon they've got a game that really does justice to the great original. Certainly, when it was demo'ed by Paul Jacquays, it looked pretty enough. *Times of Lore*-style angled overhead graphics combine with an open map, emphasising that 'One of the key aspects is to be able to go anywhere with minimal restrictions.' There's a comprehensive icon control panel at the bottom of the screen and the gameplay is standard RPG with an *Ultima VI* style party display – in other words, you see all members of your party trotting about after you in your current location.

'With most games based on existing literature, players who have read the book would obviously know how to solve the problems. And if you change the plot, everyone complains. We've got round this by maintaining the old plot

IN PERSON CHRIS 'BALANCE OF POWER' CRAWFORD

If anyone is going to get the world to take interactive entertainment design seriously, it's this guy, who puts more energy into his work than most developing nations put into their third world assistance programs. Editor and publisher of the authoritative Journal of Computer Game Design, Chris leapt off the stage into the audience and began to deliver a fast, furious assault on conventional game design concepts...

'There's a minimum acceptable level of realism in games,' Chris began, '...and it varies from subject to subject. For example, in a flight sim you can say that part of the equation is a frame rate of 8 frames a second. Above that, and the quality is acceptable. Below that, and it's irritating, it's difficult to relate to, it doesn't work. But there's also a maximum acceptable level of realism. Take sleeping in RPG's. It's realistic alright, but it's dead boring! So you have a 'window' of acceptable realism with upper and lower limits and the position of this window varies according to the subject your simulating. For example, Wing Commander has a fairly low window – the level of realism achieved by the graphics and sound is acceptable for the subject being simulated. But use those same standards to do a simulation of Twin Peaks and you'd get laughed out of court!'

Chris then went on to talk about 'operational' and 'perceptual' realism. The latter refers to the quality of sensual replication of the world, the former to the quality of mechanical replication. 'For example, Lucasfilm's Battle of Britain has great perceptual realism. You're in the cockpit shooting down the bastards! But the operational realism is not so good – in a dogfight your opponent sometimes, for no reason at all, simply flies straight down into the ground. I consider this to be major blunder!'

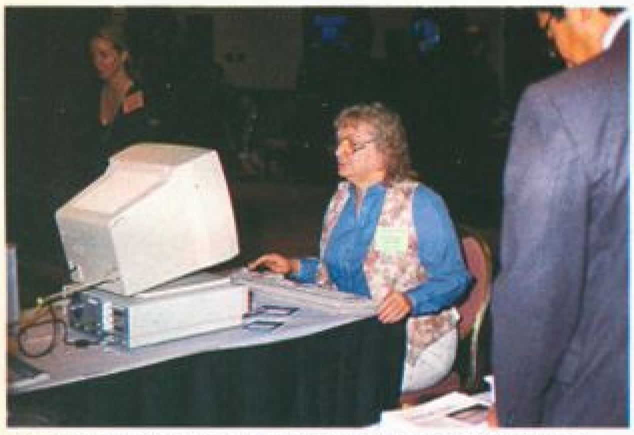
By the time Chris had finished speaking, he'd taken quite a few game designers down by a peg or two. Because, as he pointed out, when it comes to perceptual realism, we 'may have machines with 256 colours, great 3D graphics, and wonderful stereo sound', but when it comes to operational realism, 'we

DETERON

Kellyn Beck, designer of Cinemaware's *Defender of the Crown* and *Rocket Ranger* plus EA's *Centurion*, demonstrated a new role-playing game featuring digitised live actors, called *Deteron*. Impressive location graphics accompanied character mug shots with complex encounters based on emotional attitude, prior game actions, and previous meetings – plus real human voices. Stand by for a full ACE report in the near future...

modore
EDUCATION

CDTV's galore – and they all worked...sort of. Commodore announced 35 titles for the system during the show: a very mixed bag that included Sim City, Sword of Excalibur, Battle Chess, World Vista Atlas, and New Basics Electronic Cookbook. Also mentioned were interactive versions of Cinderella and (as previously reported exclusively in ACE) The Tale of Peter Rabbit with added music and sound effects.



Gail Wellington, the driving force behind Commodore's CDTV software development, does a spot of programming on an Amiga 3000 prior to the CDTV demonstration...

but adding in new characters who could have been there and building up separate stories around them. Existing characters who played minor roles can also be built up.'

You start off by recruiting Sam and Pippin and having a spot of argy-bargy with your self-seeking relative Lobelia. And no-one, absolutely no-one 'sits down and sings about gold'.

PERSONAL INTERACTIVITY ENHANCEMENT

There's a revolution in personal entertainment coming, all springing from the development of portable telephone technology. The beepers you love to hate are now going digital – and truly personal. Conference sponsors Nynex announced a new range of personal phones that use a new bandwidth manipulation system, effectively allowing everyone to have one – with the old systems, the airwaves got so clogged up that numbers had to be severely restricted. 'When the new system launches,' promised (threatened?) a spokesman, 'a telephone number will no longer denote a place – it's a person. And if that number goes out of service, you've gone!' In other words, you won't get number unobtainable, you'll get person unobtainable. And we can all guess what that means.

However, this same technology will be used for interactive personal entertainment devices, including an 'addressable Walkman' that can 'download' your choice of the latest hits. More efficient use of the airwaves will also give us 'video on demand' – TV-style units that can play your own selection of movies. Even more interesting, Nynex and other companies are researching compression techniques that will enable them to shovel even more information down your antenna, leading to the development of interactive TV with several parallel channels broadcasting simultaneously, allowing the user to 'branch' between them.

IN PERSON RICH 'POWERGLOVE' GOLD

The Powerglove responds to 14 different motions and can occasionally rise up against its master – or, in this case, one of its creators, Rich Gold

You're looking at the man largely responsible for bringing you Mattel's Powerglove. 'Would you believe', he asked, 'that the technology side of the system was a doddle? It wasn't the electronics that caused the problems, it was the tailoring of the glove. People's hands really vary in size and shape and we had great difficulty getting a fit that would suit everyone.' The answer, believe it or not, lay in Barbie Doll technology. The girls who put together the Barbie dresses worked flat out to find an answer, but even Ken agreed that the final design wasn't perfect. 'Virtual reality is obviously the next step in the Powerglove story,' agreed Rich, 'but if we had more time to work on it, it isn't the technology we'd devel-

'Never go onto the stage with children, animals, or multimedia...'

Nolan Bushnell, when the demonstration CDTV system crashed....again

The Marriott Marquis hotel on Times Square, scene of the Intertainment '90 conference

IN PERSON BRIAN 'BEYOND ZORK' MORIARTY

Brian has already appeared in ACE (issue 31) and he sent good wishes to all readers. When he addressed the Intertainment audience, one of his main arguments was the way in which game designers, particularly those producing fantasy scenarios, are constrained by old habits.

'In the early days', recalled Brian, 'memory was so short that an adventure game designer could only include objects in the locations that were vital to the story. It therefore became a habit for players, on finding an object, to do everything they could possibly think of to it. That's limiting for me as a modern designer – for example, I can't just put a glass in a room to help set the scene because every player will pick it up, examine it, bash it, throw it...'

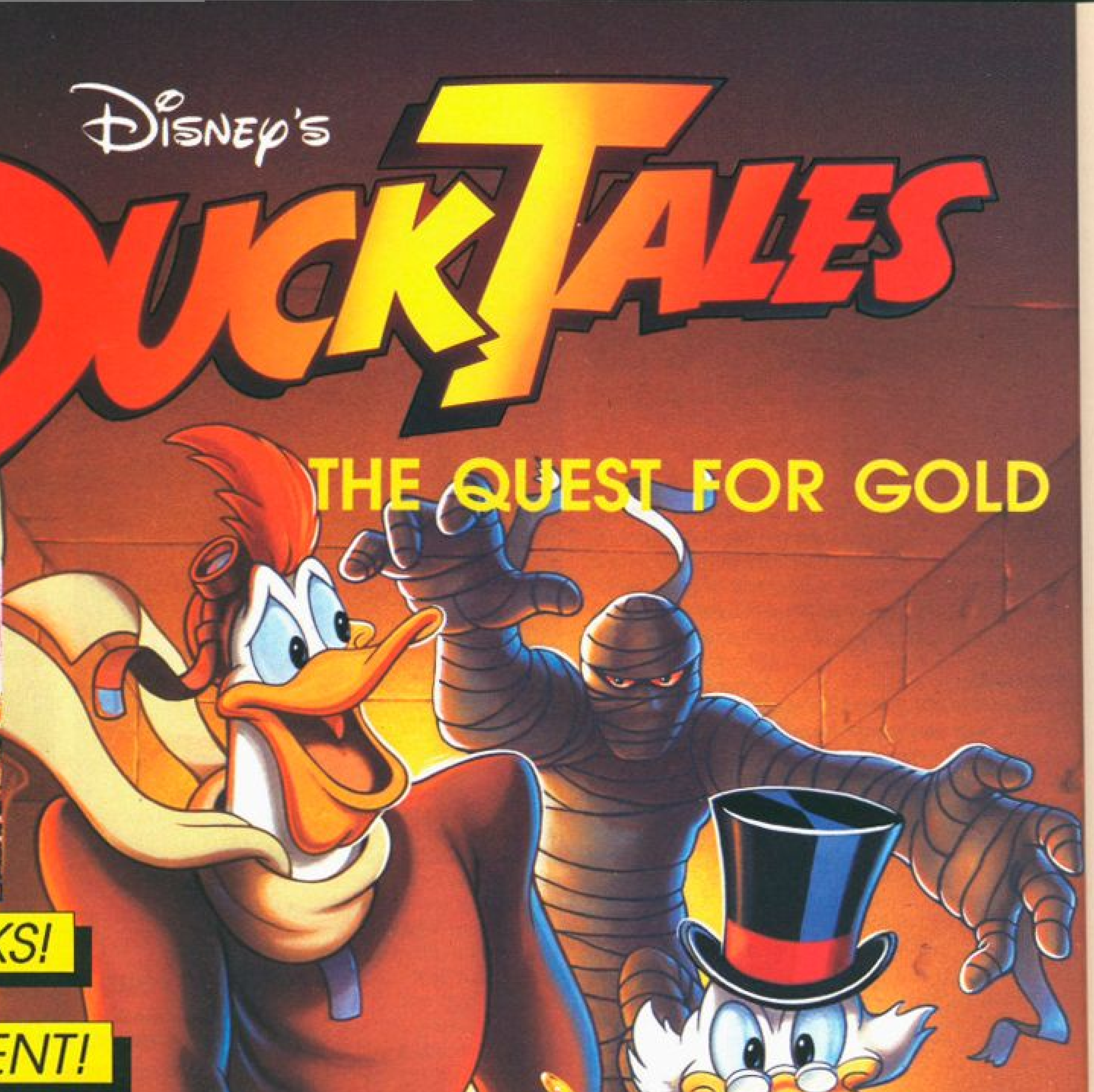
He also reiterated what is obviously a major personal concern – since he told ACE readers about it the last time he appeared in the magazine – and that's the question of stereotypes in games. On the one hand, 'stereotypes are useful for games designers. Shove in a dwarf and everyone will know that he's short, hardy, good with an axe, and skilled at picking locks.' However, to invent new character types in games requires extensive memory and gameplay additions to introduce them. Brian then demonstrated Loom, in which he tried to get around this problem by packaging a complete background scenario on audio cassette. It worked, but at a cost.

Sadly, Brian is moving into educational software development, so we may not be hearing so much from him on the games front in future. Let's hope the man who brought us *Wishbringer*, *Beyond Zork* and the infamous Coconut of Quendor doesn't stay away for long.

CDI, DVI – and now...TVI! Videotron's interactive television system allows the viewer to modify the course of a TV program or select a camera shot using the TVI keys on a special remote keypad. Interactive television offers multiple choices within a live or taped TV program such as a musical, a quiz, a drama, or a variety show. Stand by for a detailed ACE feature in Spring 1991

DISNEY'S DUCKTALES

THE QUEST FOR GOLD



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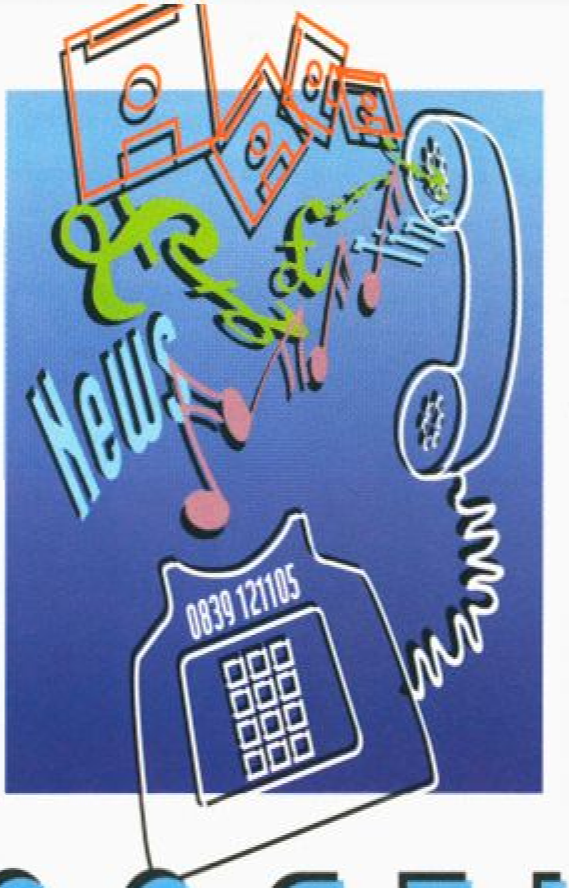

GET INTO INTERACTION

At 12.00 p.m., Wednesday December 12, ACE launch the Ultimate Interactive Experience - the most fun you can have with your index finger!

The ACE Interactive Newsline is changing, becoming more than a mere newsline, more than a simple competition, metamorphosing into the ULTIMATE Interactive Experience! News, competitions, tips, interviews - it's got the lot! But this is going to mean remembering loads of 'phone numbers, right? Wrong! Just one number leads you into an incredible world where, simply by TALKING into your 'phone, you can access every service on offer. Remember, only ACE can do this, because ACE is the future!

We're kicking off the new improved service with a fantastic competition based around *B.A.T.*, ACE-rated on page 80 of this very issue, PLUS the opportunity to listen to *B.A.T.*'s programmers talking directly to YOU about their excellent game, PLUS the familiar ACE Newsline, the only way to find out the very latest and greatest on the computer games scene.

So get ready! Remember, the fun starts at **12.00 p.m., Wednesday December 12**.

John McDaid, hyperauthor – check out his wares next issue

FUTURE 'PHONE FUN

By calling the ACE Interactive Number you'll get instant access to EVERY 'phoneline service. In addition to the long-established Newsline, over the coming weeks you'll be able to enter major competitions with EXCLUSIVE prizes, listen to programmers talking about their latest games (this month's *B.A.T.* bonanza is just the beginning), get purchasing power by listening to definitive ACE mini-reviews of games just received, hear the hottest tips for the hottest games, and loads of other stuff so secret that it can't be revealed just yet. Stay tuned - the best is yet to come!

ACE INTERACTIVE NUMBER:

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CALLS COST 38p PER MINUTE (PEAK) AND 25p PER MINUTE (OFF-PEAK)

In ACE issue 41 next month:

INSIDE INTERACTION

- ● What is an interactive 'phoneline? How can the 'phoneline recognise my voice? Just what does happen when I make that call? Next month ACE reveals all when we take you behind the scenes of Broad Systems (the brainy bods who operate the ACE 'phoneline).
- ● ACE has been skipping Stateside again and brings you exclusive news on HYPERFICTION, the future of interactive fiction.
- ● Could Marconi, manufacturers of combat simulators for the Armed Forces, be making a move into computer games? ACE reveals all - next month!
- ● An exclusive look at the forthcoming Martian World from Origin.

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT, SO HAND THIS FORM TO YOUR NEWSAGENT NOW!

DEAR NEWSAGENT,
I like the magazine so much, I want to buy the company. Unfortunately, because I am not as rich as that bloke from the shaver and nose-and-ear hair trimmer ads, I guess I'll have to settle for a copy of the very reasonably priced February issue of ACE Magazine (Advanced Computer Entertainment), due out on Tuesday January 8. I will be forever in your debt.

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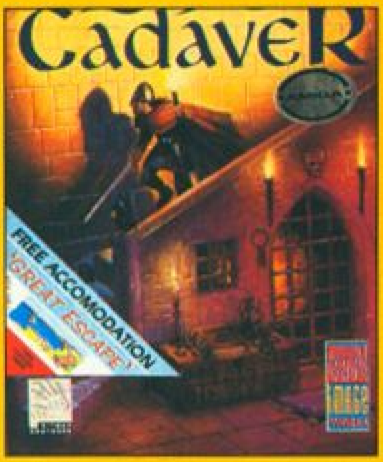
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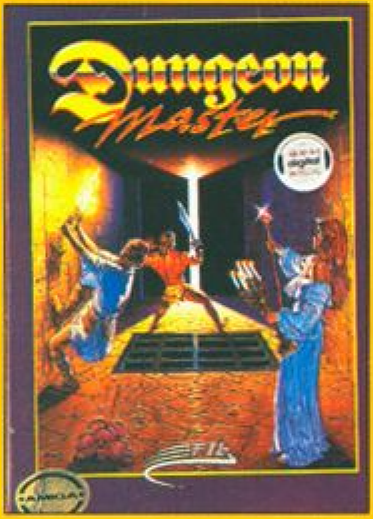
Dungeon Master

DUNGEON MASTER
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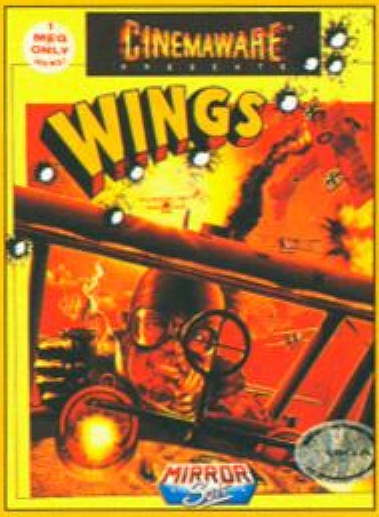
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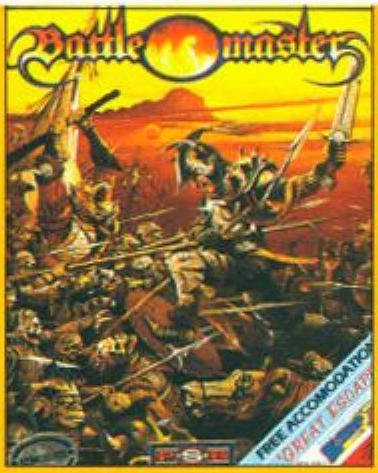
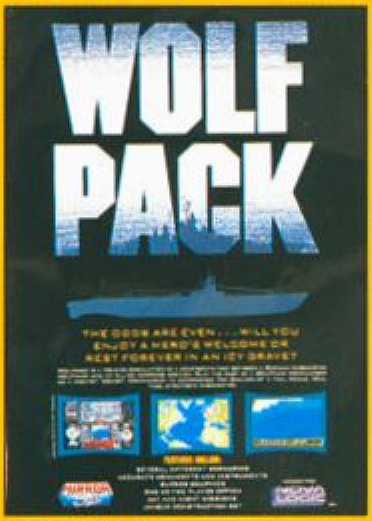

Battle master
FREE ACCOMODATION 'GREAT ESCAPE'

BATTLEMASTER



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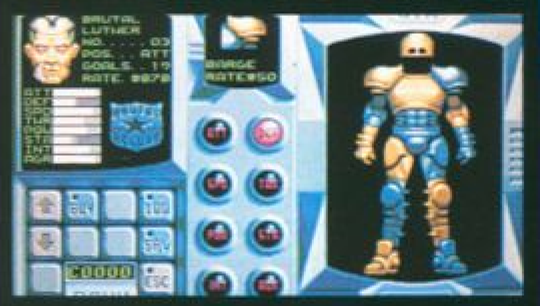
SPEEDBALL 2

BRUTAL DELUXE

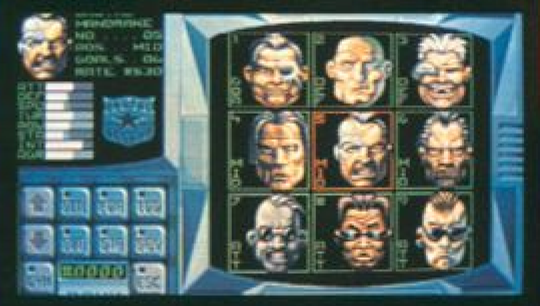
SOME DAY, ALL SPORT WILL BE PLAYED THIS WAY

It's two years since the last ball was thrown on a Speedball pitch. There are new teams, new stadia and new rules. The arena is bigger, the players arc tougher and the action is faster than ever before.

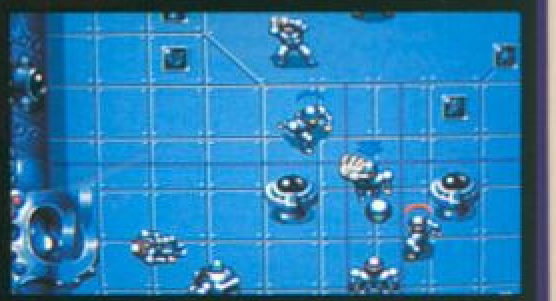
The challenge is this. Take control of Brutal Deluxe, the worst team in Speedball history, and turn them into champions.



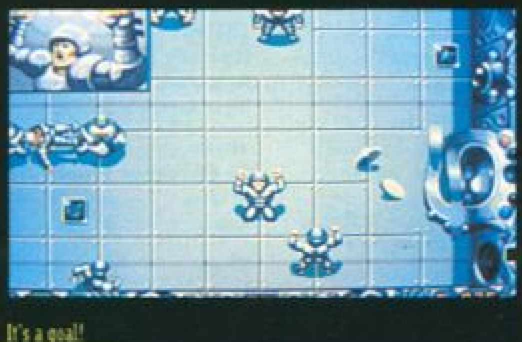
Transform weaklings into killers in the gym.



A squad full of wimps? $hell out for a Star Player!



Two divisions and 15 teams stand between you and the championship. Take no prisoners.



It's a goal!

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SCREEN TEST

Prince of Persia: this may not look that hot in a screenshot, but just wait till you play it. Superb – check it out on page 83

Gauntlet 3: will the archetypal multi-player fantasy be able to hack it in 3D? Check out the ACE preplay on page 54

ACE RATED!

Question: Is this game really going to grab me? And for how long?
Answer: the PIC curve – the heart of the **ACE Rating System.**

The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve*
– is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.

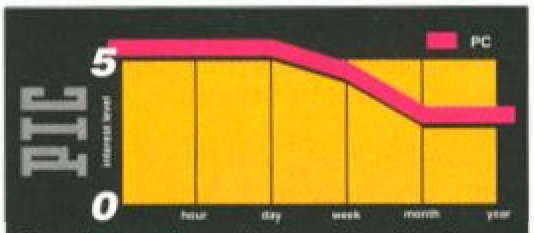
We on ACE know you don't just play a game – you experience it. The Predicted Interest Curve is the only review system that takes this all-important factor into account.

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...

For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – who probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute anyway.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.



The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

● The very fast multi-level parallax scrolling **● Excellent sound effects in the dentist's waiting room** **● Gameplay in the 3D maze Barbican section**	**● Limited use of objects** **● Over-frequent disk access** **● Colour combinations in the bedroom scene**

We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.

ACE AWARDS

ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!

ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended without hesitation.

Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.

One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.

Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.

THE LINE UP

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45 **CHIP'S CHALLENGE** *US Gold*
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91 **DRAGON BREED** *Activision*
95 **DEATH TRAP** *Anco*
96 **ROGUE TROOPER** *Empire*

ON CONSOLE *pages 101-107*

Megadrive ***Strider****, Gameboy* ***Boulderdash*** *and more....enjoy!*

ON CD *page 111*

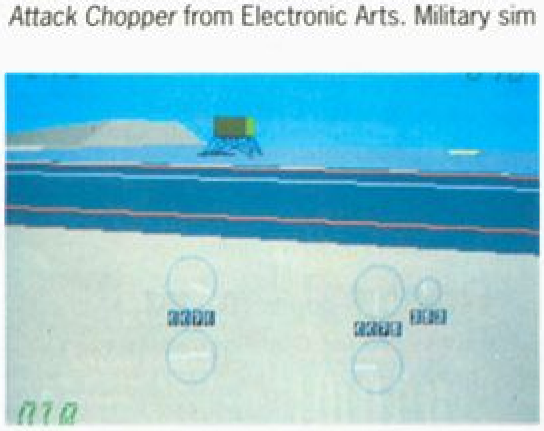
Exclusive preview of the latest DVI Workstation

MICROPROSE are preparing to unleash a multi-chopper assault on the simulation market. ACE went to the USA to catch an exclusive peek of the game in development...

GUNSHIP 2000

Gunship has to be the most popular helicopter combat game ever – Microprose claim it still lifts off the shelves in respectable numbers, despite having been released over three years ago. Attention to detail, extensive missions and lots of incidental interest as you climbed up through the ranks made *Gunship* a winner.

Times have moved on, however, and *Gunship's* role as Top Gun of the chopper squad has arguably been surrendered to newcomer *LHX Attack Chopper* from Electronic Arts. Military sim technology has improved in other ways, too. First you've got the obvious advances in 3D graphic routines and this has been accompanied by an increasing concentration on strategic diversity. Microprose's own *M1 Tank Platoon* pointed the way ahead on this last count, giving the player greater strategic opportunity by adding in more vehicles. Now, in the same vein, the company are out to regain air supremacy with *Gunship 2000.*



Now here's a neat idea, though it's not 100% certain it will be included in the final version. You can remove the cockpit display (except for vital gauges) and give yourself a better view of your surroundings. Here you're near the runway...

'This game is more revolutionary than evolutionary,' declares game designer Jim Day. 'First, you've got multiple helicopters in flight at the same time. As the commander of a five chopper platoon, you can tailor your outfit from a whole range of state-of-the-art gunships including Blackhawks, Apaches, Cobras, Kiowas, and more.'

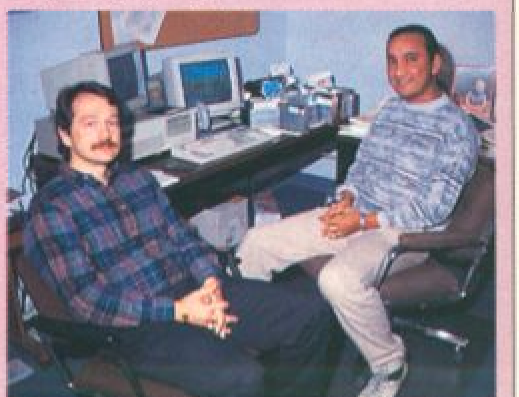
Quantity doesn't mean degraded quality, however, and Microprose have wisely ensured that the player still has access to total single chopper capability and gameplay whenever he wants. However, the ability to man, equip, and command an entire platoon adds enormously to the challenge.

What's more, you get a far greater number of armament options in Gunship 2000. The game designers spent hours poring over army manuals

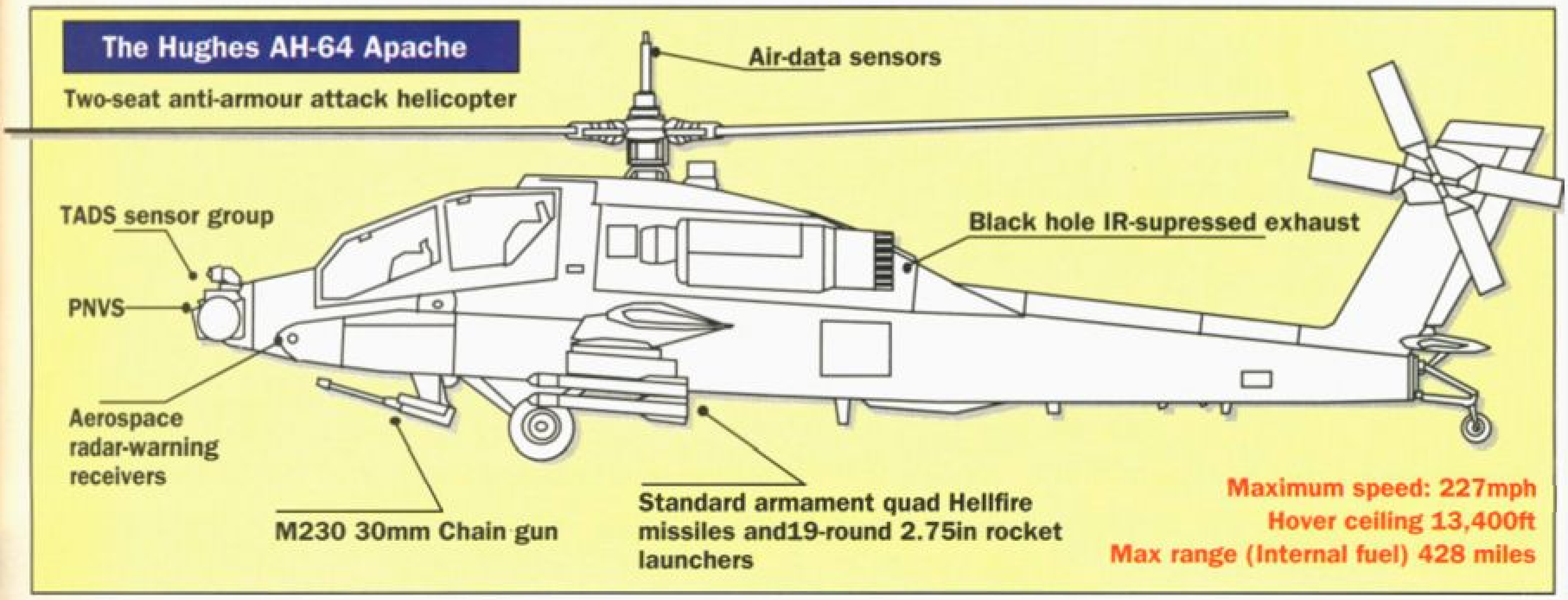
MEET THE TEAM

Work on Gunship 2000 started in Spring 1990 and, by the time it's finished, will represent nearly ten man-years of work. A significant proportion of this was devoted to the development of the new 3D system.

Lead programmer Darrell Dennies is actually a true-blue Britisher and it may come as no surprise to discover that he served his programming apprenticeship with Digital Integration. Additional programming is being done by Detmar Peterke, artworks by Michael Reis, and marketing inspiration by Moshe Milich. Game design is by Jim Day.

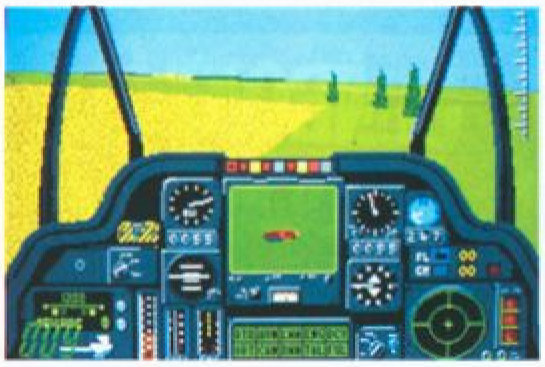


Games designer Jim Day (on the left) and Darrell Dennies relax in Darrell's dug-out at 'Prose's US headquarters


The Hughes AH-64 Apache
Two-seat anti-armour attack helicopter
Air-data sensors
TADS sensor group
PNVS
Black hole IR-supressed exhaust
Aerospace radar-warning receivers
M230 30mm Chain gun
Standard armament quad Hellfire missiles and19-round 2.75in rocket launchers
Maximum speed: 227mph
Hover ceiling 13,400ft
Max range (Internal fuel) 428 miles

FLASH TOPOGRAPHY

To do justice to the enhanced gameplay features of *Gunship 2000*, Microprose have developed a powerful new 3D system. Called 'Topographical 3D', the system has two main advantages over its rivals. First, it's faster (although 'Prose point out that this game is designed for more powerful 68000 micros and PC 286+ machines). Second, it allows the programmers to include more terrain details without bogging down the system. Result, more detail, faster action, and larger maps. It could take you at least quarter of an hour to fly in a straight line across one of the worlds, giving you a vast playing area.



Now for the first time you can fly gunships over home territory as Microprose include a European scenario. Stoke Poges, your time has come!

Varied viewpoints are now de rigeur in all flight sims and Gunship 2000 gives you plenty of options. There's rather more to see, however, because first you have up to five choppers and second you make them do much more interesting things – true to modern helicopter design, some of them can even do rolls and loops!

and the result is that every type of chopper can be kitted out with practically any variety of real-life compatible ordnance.

WEST END THEATRE

There are two Western theatres of war for Gunship 2000 missions: the Persian Gulf (ironic, eh?) and Europe. The Gulf scenarios, although still in an early stage of development, already have the ring of familiarity about them, but the European scenarios look to be something quite spectacular. There's something rather eerie about piloting a few tons of war machine over cornfields, windmills, and the green, green grass of home.

Long-term interest is something that Microprose sims have never been short of, but this time the company are really making sure that *Gunship 2000* sticks around till its namesake anniversary by building in full scenario disk capability. Wherever there's trouble and dissension, wherever the forces of good are required to dump vast amounts of high-ex into the back gardens of the forces of evil, the data disks will be able to send you there.

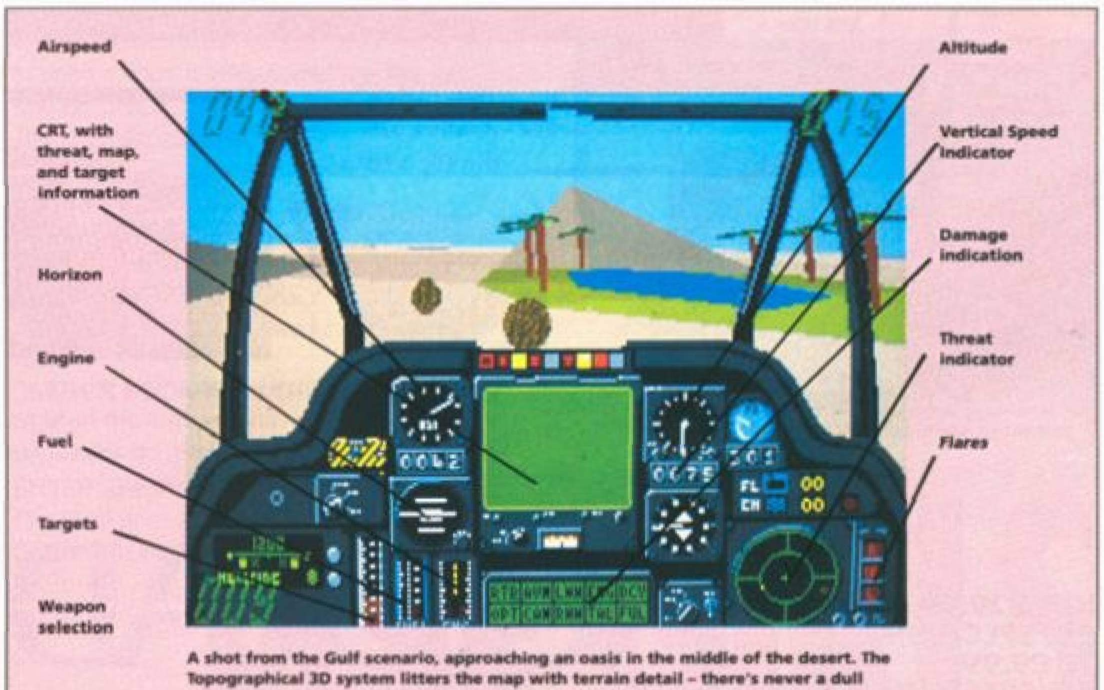
Gunship 2000 is shaping up to be another superlative long-term interest challenge in the true Microprose tradition. It also points the way forward for air combat sims by increasing the strategic elements and adding multiple command units. We'll be following the game's development over the next few months in ACE and the game should be ready for final review in Spring 1991. We can't wait...

ACE PREPLAY

Multiple chopper capability Enhanced strategic opportunity Greater terrain details Data disk compatibility	Will only run on 16-bit machines and more powerful PC's ...Otherwise, nothing yet!

Release Details

On all 16 bit formats in Spring/Summer '91, prices and release dates to be announced


Airspeed
CRT, with threat, map, and target information
Horizon
Engine
Fuel
Targets
Weapon selection
Altitude
Vertical Speed Indicator
Damage indication
Threat indicator
Flares

A shot from the Gulf scenario, approaching an oasis in the middle of the desert. The Topographical 3D system litters the map with terrain detail – there's never a dull moment while you're in the air, even if there's nothing to obliterate

Small Craft Warning.

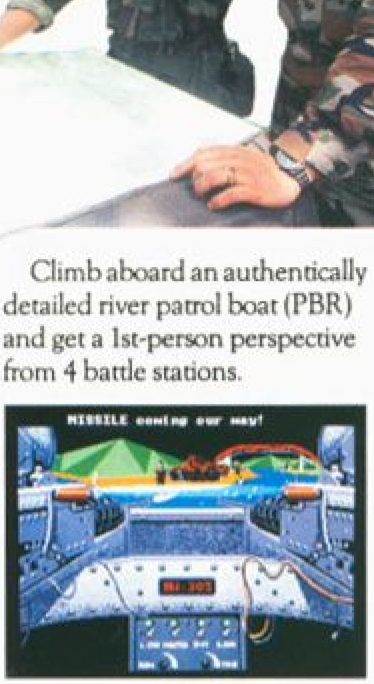
Prepare for a storm. Of bullets. *Gunboat.*™ Eight tons of U.S. Navy firepower crammed into a 31 ft. hull.

VIETNAM
Hue
Da Nang

The fastest, most agile arsenal ever to turn 29 knots up a jungle river.

GUNBOAT
RIVER COMBAT SIMULATION
ACCOLADE

Climb aboard an authentically detailed river patrol boat (PBR) and get a 1st-person perspective from 4 battle stations.

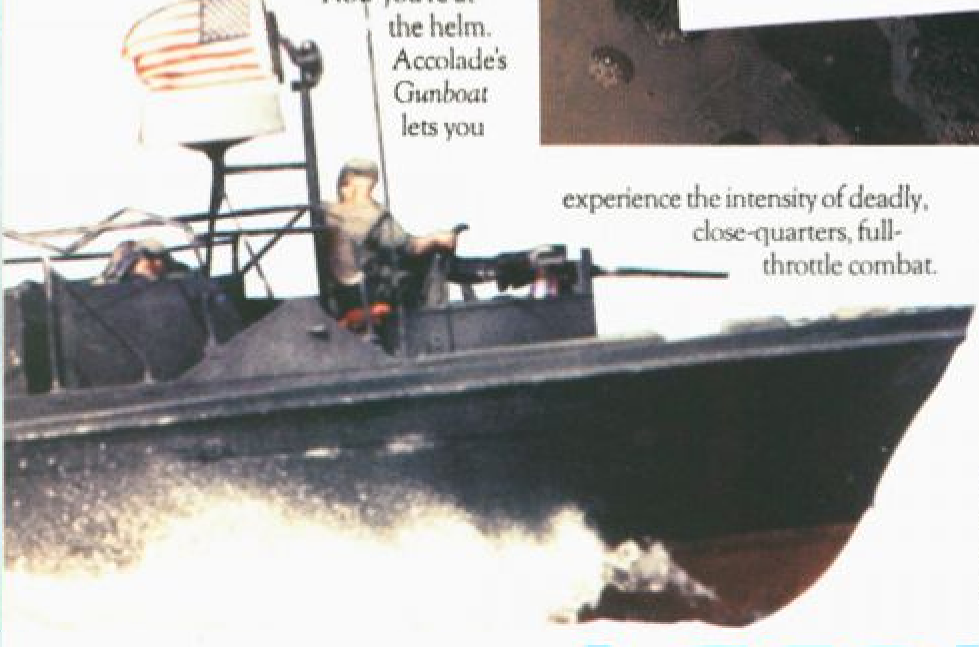


Uncoil twin M60 machine guns and grenade launchers on renegade Viet Cong, Panamanian rebels and the murderous Colombian drug cartel.

They're all on the river. Waiting.

Polygon-fill animation and bit-map graphics immerse you in the steamy reality of 3 sweltering combat zones. Twenty missions lie ahead, in countries where the mortar fire is as thick as mosquitoes.

Gunboat. The water's about to get rough.



Now you're at the helm. Accolade's *Gunboat* lets you experience the intensity of deadly, close-quarters, full-throttle combat.

River combat, where an enemy ambush lurks around any bend, up any canyon or by any bridge.

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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SORCERORS GET... ...ALL THE GIRLS

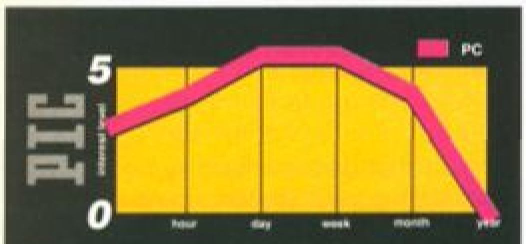
Ex-Infocom personnel create a new LEGEND for Microprose

Say what you like about adventure games, there are times when the industry comes up with a cracker that any gamester with half a brain ought to shell out for. *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*, *Lurking Horror*, and *Wonderland*, to name but three – and two of those came from the now-defunct Infocom.

Adventure scenarios, like books, tend to draw the bulk of their inspiration from a single author, unlike other games that are usually team efforts. Lucasfilm have managed to grab Brian Moriarty, who's recently given them Loom, and now another Infocom genius, Steve 'Leather Goddesses/ Planetfall' Meretsky, has teamed up with some Infocompanions to form the Legend label, distributed by Microprose. *Sorcerers Get All The Girls* is his first Legendary product.

And it's excellent, no doubt about it. Although it suffers from an extremely annoying parsing defect, this is a graphic adventure par excellence. It may not have quite the technical sophistication of *Wonderland*, but it makes up for that by generating a great deal of text, some nifty pictures (with a tad of animation), and a complex story structure.

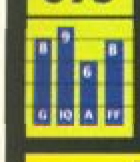
As Ernie Eaglebeak you start the game playing punchball for your wicked stepfather. You take refuge at Sorcerer University where you get stuck into student life until someone from a marauding band of philistines clobbers you on the back of the head. When you awake, the university is deserted and you have a vague inkling that you must locate your erstwhile Professor Tickingclock and reassemble the infamous Sorcerers Appliance using five scattered components.



The documentation arouses interest and a couple of subdued laughs but it doesn't get the adrenalin pumping out of your nostrils. Neither does the first glimpse of the game and the rather unwieldy menu system. However, you soon begin to appreciate the narrative detail and the numerous diversions and after a day's playing your hooked – until you crack it.

ACE RATING

895



IBM PC

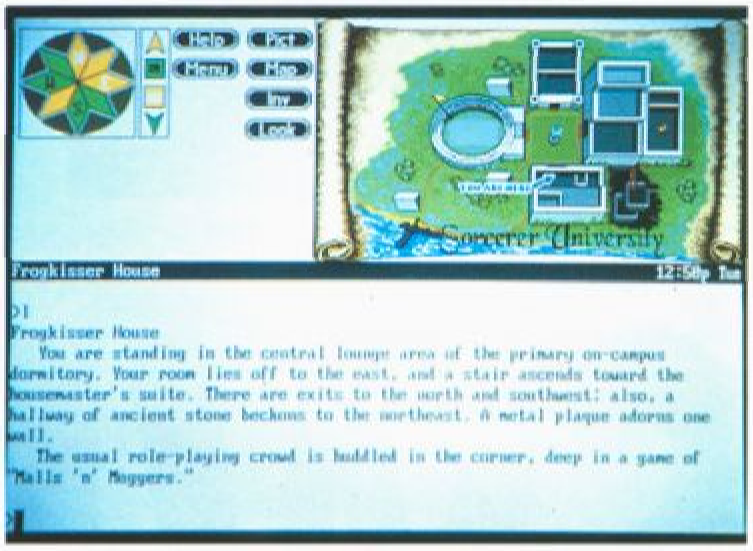
Great graphics and – if you've got a sound board – superb musical interludes. Unexpanded machines get some impressive samples via the beep module, but they're so quiet that you can hardly hear them – not a great success. Not recommended if you don't have a hard disk: the game comes on nine 5.25" floppies and requires over 3 megabytes of disk space.

RELEASE DETAILS

Currently on release only in the States, but Microprose UK will be making a UK distribution decision in the near future. Watch this space – but if you can't wait 'phone US 'Prose on 0101 301 771 6700 for mail order details.

A LA CARTE

SGATG, like *Wonderland*, combines point-and-click menu input with traditional typing. You don't HAVE to do any typing at all, but the menu system isn't as comprehensive as Mag Scrolls' and you may well prefer to do so. There are verb, noun, and preposition menus that enable you to construct any sentence and the parser is (with one major exception) excellent.



```
Frogkisser House                                          12:58p Tue
>I
Frogkisser House
   You are standing in the central lounge area of the primary on-campus
dormitory. Your room lies off to the east, and a stair ascends toward the
housemaster's suite. There are exits to the north and southwest; also, a
hallway of ancient stone beckons to the northeast. A metal plaque adorns one
wall.
   The usual role-playing crowd is huddled in the corner, deep in a game of
"Malls 'n' Moggers."
>
```

We've got rid of the menus and called up the map option, enabling us to get more narrative on screen at once and move from location to location by clicking on them...

The display includes a compass rose that shows possible exits and some options buttons for selecting different screen configurations. The latter include a map display, showing your current location and offering a 'click on it and you'll go there' facility (which only really works for adjacent locations). You can also have a text-only display, location graphics and play around with the various report elements to create a screen layout that suits you best. When location graphics are displayed, clicking on an object describes it and double clicking does the 'obvious' thing with it (usually getting it).

All this is a vast improvement on earlier adventure titles but is still not up to the *Wonderland* standard. The effect is spoilt by one major parsing shortcoming which used to be standard but nowadays, frankly, has to be regarded as a right pain in the a**e. This is the old, unintelligent 'I need to be told to do everything approach' that rears its head when you try to open a door. It goes something like this:

ENTER SHED

The shed door is closed

OPEN DOOR

The shed door is locked.

UNLOCK DOOR

Unlock the shed door with what?

UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY

Which key? The little brown key or the big metal key?

UNLOCK DOOR WITH THE LITTLE BROWN KEY

OK

ENTER SHED

The shed door is closed

OPEN DOOR

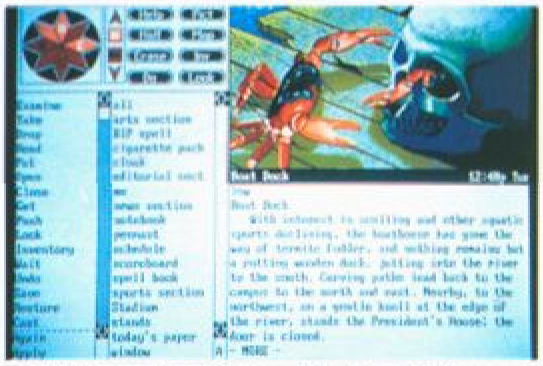
OK...

Nowadays, if I want to enter a locked shed and I have the right key, I expect the program to do it for me without all this needless fuss and bother.

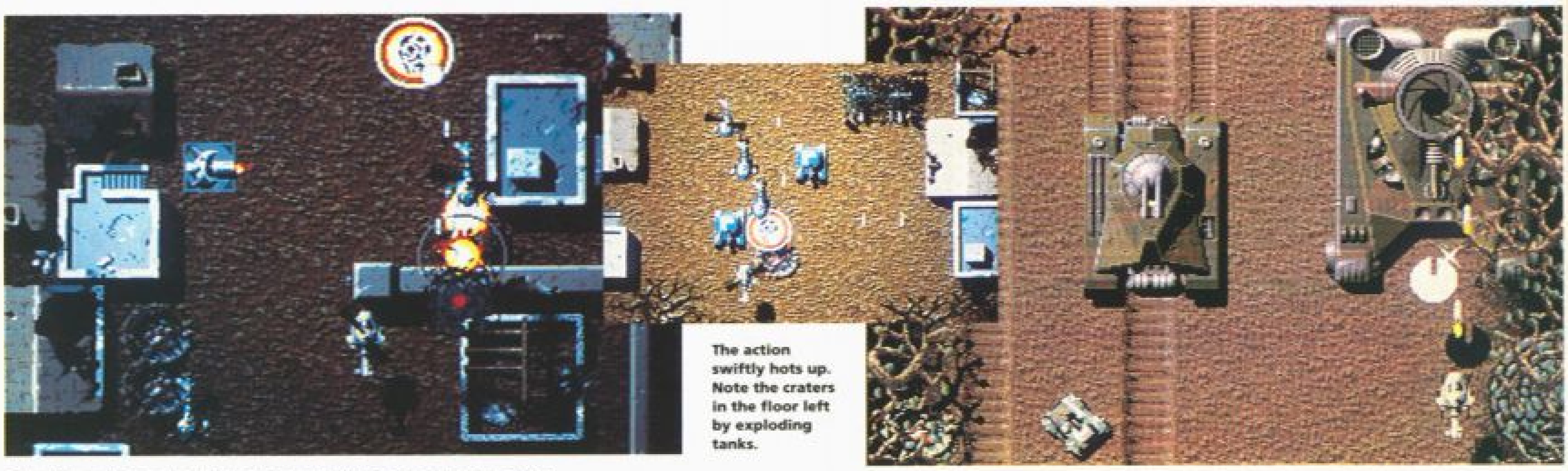
On the good side, however, *SGATG* is a big game with an involved and engaging story. You may not like the humour much – some of it is truly dreadful – but you will like the narrative variety and the numerous little sub-scenarios you can eavesdrop on or get involved with. And of course there's also the small matter of casting spells (especially the ENLARGE BUST one, ahem...) and the girls – who actually play a rather less titillating role in the story than you might expect.

If you fancy a romp through a fictional world, casting spells, chatting up the girls, and getting into some very tight corners, this is the adventure for you. Definitely up to Infocom standards and a promising debut for Legend.

● **Steve Cooke**



The default screen layout gives you the option of either mouse control using the menus on the left or typing using the text window on the lower right



Ghost Town. Nice and gentle to start with. Only a side gun and a gentle trickle of choppers to worry about. Lovely.

The action swiftly hots up. Note the craters in the floor left by exploding tanks.

...And the big tank said to the little tank, "You're too young to smoke" (or something).

SWIV

THE SALES CURVE launch you into an orgy of destruction from the programmers of *Silkworm*

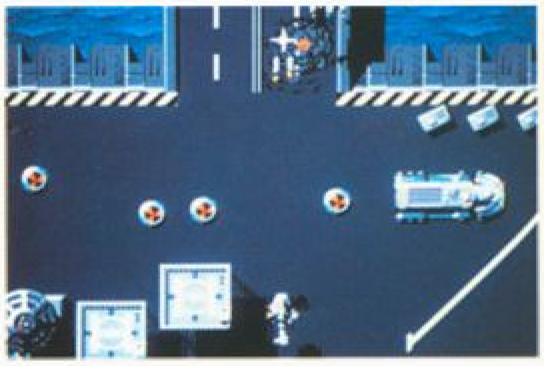
Remember *Silkworm*? Two players (one in a helicopter, the other in a jeep) turning hundreds upon hundreds of tonnes of enemy hardware into junk with homing missiles, ground-to-air rockets and machine guns?

Well now the 'magic' is back with *SWIV*, possibly the most gratuitous death-fest ever served up on computer disk.

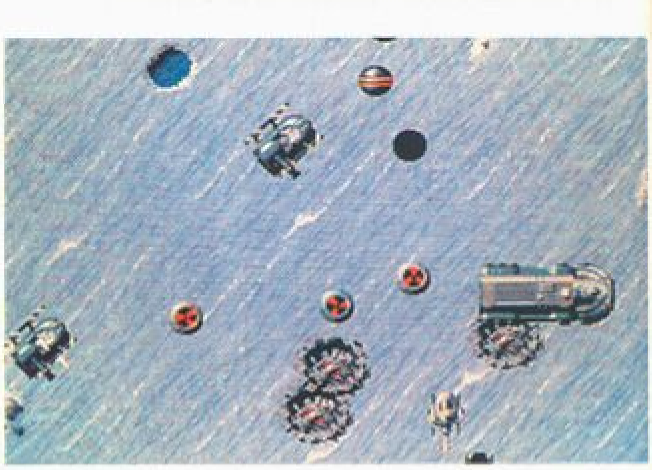
This sequel in all but name has been coded by the *Silkworm* team, Random Access. The most obvious difference between *SWIV* and its predecessor is the top-down view. There are no shocks in store, but a couple of pleasant surprises for fans of the original.

Rather than being broken down into stages, the action takes place through one level which is split into various landscapes. Disk access is continual, but completely unobtrusive, thanks to some thoughtful forward planning. Little chunks are pulled off the disk the whole time, rather than big blocks having to be ported across breaking up the rhythm of the violence.

While the distinction between stages inside a level and level changing may seem a bit academic, it makes your mission seem a bit more realistic; working your way across a huge landscape rather than numerically defined levels. Bit of a marginal point, but a nice touch none-the-less.



At the end of the airbase stage, the Jeep (if you're in two player mode) turns into a speedboat for the up-coming sea level.



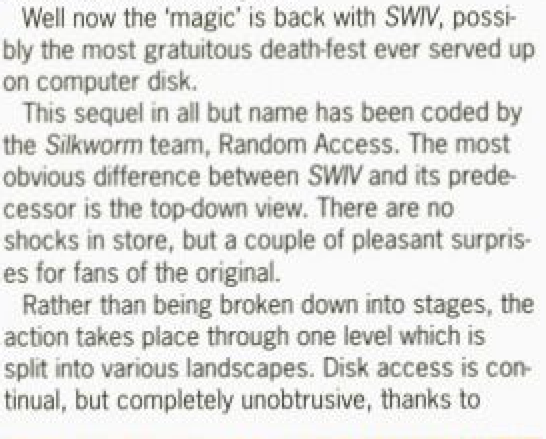
The apocalyptic ice-rink. The frozen wastes are filled with mine-laying ships and ski-sleds. Tricky territory for the jeep.

The usual dangers are faced by the two players, and the guys at the Sales Curve claim that the game will throw up an appropriate level of resistance to block your progress depending on your performance. Novice blasters will have an easier time (in the initial stages) than experts who shoot everything on the screen.

While Player One remains in his – albeit powered up – helicopter for the duration of the game, Player Two can have an absolute scream, 'cause whenever his jeep reaches the water – boing! – it turns into a speedboat.

Among the background graphics we are promised are a ghost town, a desert level, an futureworld, a spaceships' graveyard and plenty more. There's even grassland section where the jeep can trundle around leaving patterns in the corn. The mid-level baddie for this stage rises up from the field leaving mystic-looking circles in the corn. Oo-ee-ooh!.

● Jim Douglas



"Circles in the corn, round and round", etc. Note the tracks left by the jeep in the grass.

ACE PREPLAY

👍	👎
High level of violence Lovely backgrounds Non-irritating disk access	High level of violence Shoot-outs aren't as exciting as they were, especially when not supported by license razzamatazz

Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	Jan '91
ATARI ST	£24.99	Jan '91
SPECTRUM	£10.99cs • £14.99dk	Jan '91
C64/128	£10.99cs • £14.99dk	Jan '91

HARD DRIVIN' 2

Domark, keen to maximise the new interest in the year-old *Hard Drivin'* stirred up by the *Wheels of Fire* compilation, invites you to put – if you will – pedal to the metal once again

Hard Drivin' II isn't converted from an Atari coin-op. Rather it's Domark's own sequel to its biggest hit of last year. With the promise of faster, more attractive graphics, three new courses and a track editing facility, *HD II - Drive Harder* (ho ho) appears to be one of the more comprehensively improved sequels of late. Original author Juergen Friedrich has returned to lend his programming razzle-dazzle, and he's not been messing about either. Thanks to Jeurgen's techno-wizardry, you can now connect your ST, Amiga or PC to another machine for some head-to-head two-player action!

The track editing 'suite' is heavily detailed, and it looks a bit unfriendly at the start. A crosshair sight and a powerful zoom facility enable absolutely spot-on editing. Far more flexible than many track editors around, *HD2* allows you to put houses in the middle of the road, bridges leading into rivers and deadly bends, well, anywhere you want.

It's obviously worth remembering, though, that you have to drive on the course yourself, and however amusing it may be to make the cars perform nigh-on impossible feats at every turn, that the computer driver will probably fare a lot better in tricky situations than you on your first drive, even on a course of your own.

Hard Drivin' II, unlike the original, is for 16-bit owners only. Perhaps a wise decision in the light of the 64 version.

● **Jim Douglas**

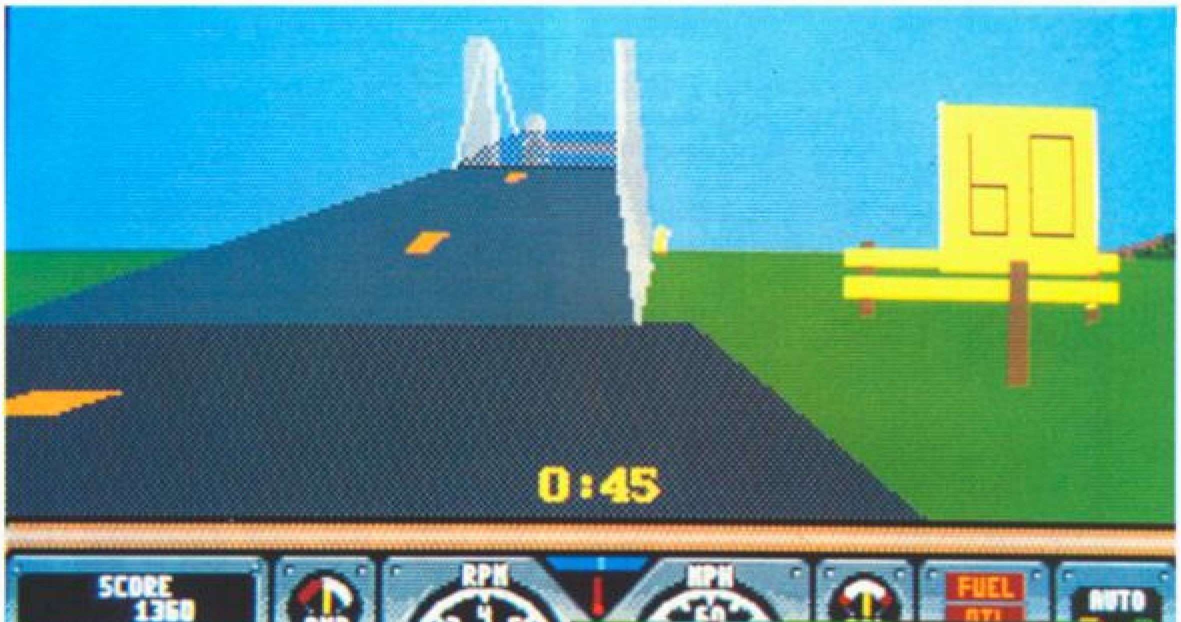
ACE PREPLAY

- Faster, better graphics
- New courses
- Track editor

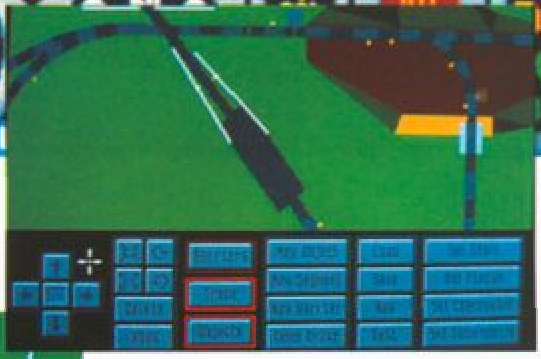
- Will the tricky car control from Part One be sorted out?

Release Details

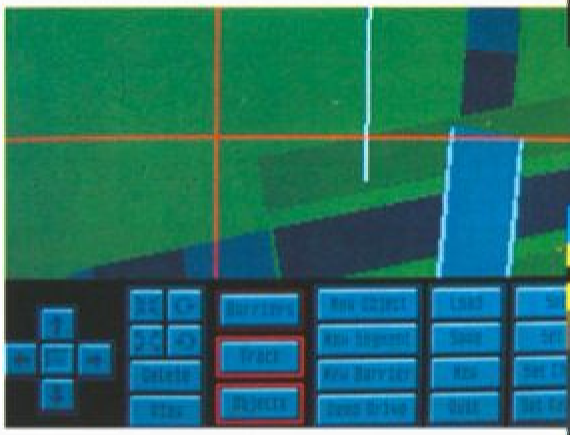
AMIGA £24.99 Imminent



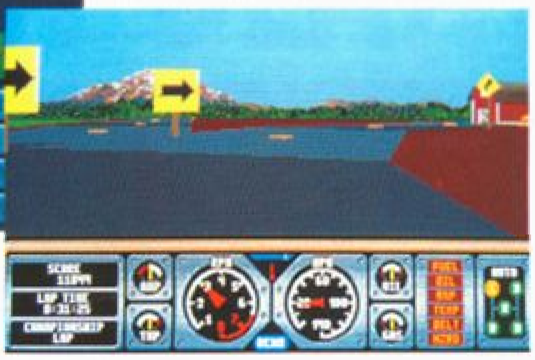
Bridge approach. The frame rate has been much improved. Instead of the jerks of its predecessor, the new game moves even large objects with a good turn of speed.

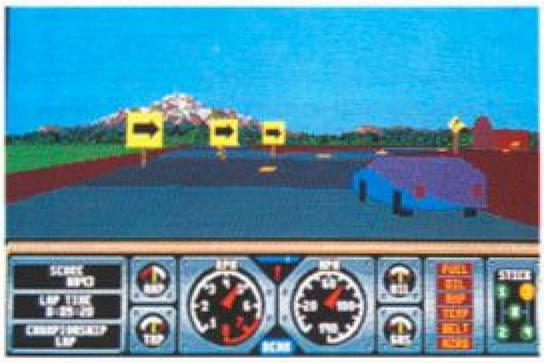


Track overview in the Editor. From this distance you can see if your obstacles are too close together, and guage if you have created a fast/slow or impossible circuit.

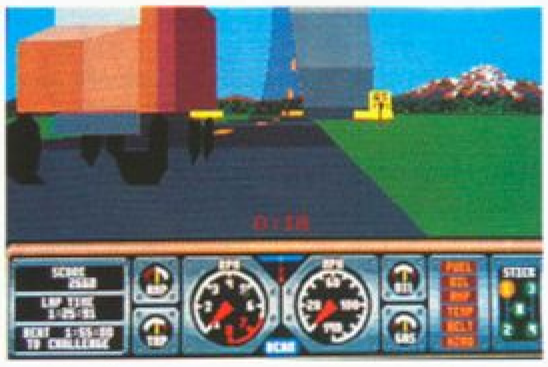


The track editor in full swing. The rather unfriendly looking set of switches is misleading. It's as easy as pie to put together a track of your own. There'll be houses in the middle of the road before you know it.





Taking the outside route with the Photon Phantom. Win the race and the Phantom takes on your abilities and style. Spooky.



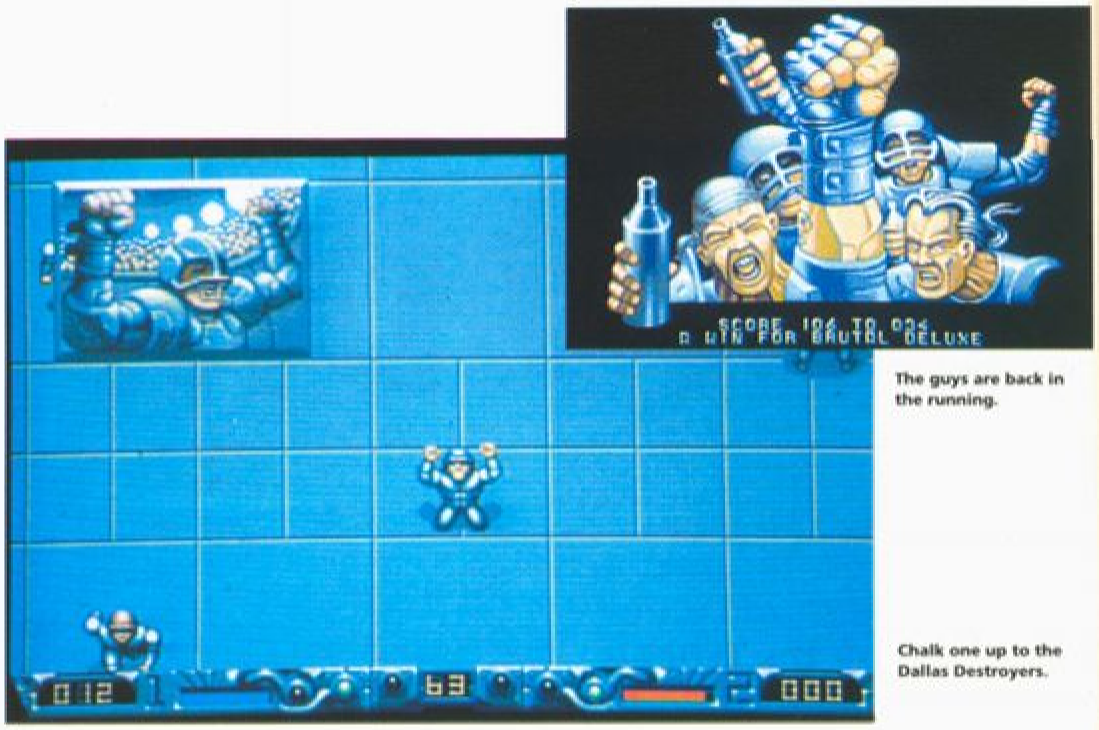
The Hanger Lane gyratory system will be a breeze after this. Best not to tangle with this vehicle, concentrate instead on getting your car up to a speed to perform the famous loop.

SPEEDBALL 2

More frantic ferocious fun from IMAGEWORKS

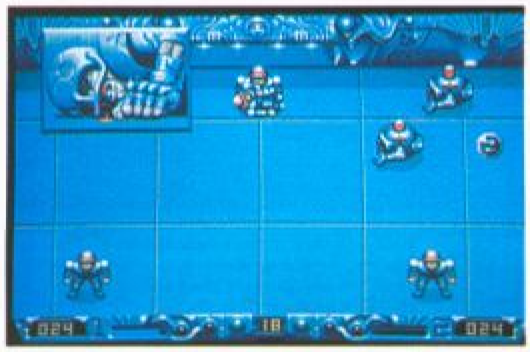
Something is seriously warped when hooligans invade the pitch and start playing the game! You can think of this futuristic sports-sim as a cross between American Football and Rollerball. Let's play Speedball.

The ball launches into play and the crowd roars with anticipation. Up against the computer or another human player, Speedball winners score the most points – not necessary the most goals. Points are gained by scoring goals, injuring your opponents players and throwing the ball at strategic locations around the stadium. Your team is split into attack, midfield, defence, a goalkeeper and substitutes. The game is played over a eight-way scrolling pitch. Every match is divided into two halves, each lasting 90 seconds. Players can collect pick-ups which appear round the pitch. Tokens affect the entire team and last for a limited amount of time. These collectibles can freeze your opponents team, reverse their joystick movements, give you possession of the ball, make your team immune to tackles, and so on. In addition, pieces of armour and weaponry provide the likes of stronger attacking, greater throwing and increased defensive abilities when picked-up. Every player has individual attributes which affect their performance during the match. In-between games you can purchase better player-ability (ouch).



The guys are back in the running.

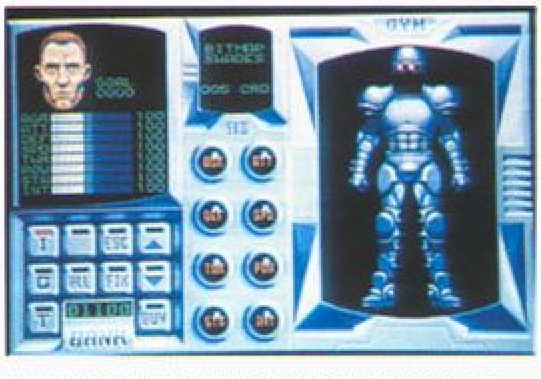
Chalk one up to the Dallas Destroyers.



Not so much Robocop as Robomedics as another player bites the dust.

So how does Speedball 2 improve on the original? Larger pitch, smoother control and a player-manager element to name but three. Speedball 2 is a brilliant competitive two-player game which ranks alongside the likes of Kick Off and Tetris. As a single-player game, I'm a little less sure. Although the Bitmap Brothers spent about 40% of the development time working on the Artificial Intelligence for computer controlled players, the game still has to be played as a two-player game to get the most out of it.

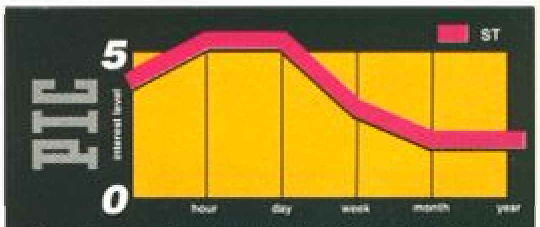
• Rik Haynes



Buy yourself a better body in the gym but be careful... too aggressive players will rather fight their opponents than score goals while a smart squad has quicker reactions and makes more off-the-ball attacks on the opposition. The only way to be sure is mix to the max.

BETTER THAN ALL THE REST

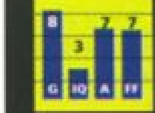
If you think Speedball 2 looks good on ST wait till you play the Amiga version. The Bitmap Brothers are using the advanced audio-visual features of Commodore's baby to produce a superior game. For instance, Speedball 2 on the Amiga will incorporate digitised sound effects – handled by Richard Joseph – for grunts, slides, crowd noises, announcer comments, etc. Instead of boring panels, the pitch will have proper markings. This, coupled with a 32-colour palette and even smoother scrolling, will make Amiga Speedball 2 a title for those gameplayers who demand that little bit extra from their games.



The original was extremely playable, but this sequel has playability refined to breaking point. Even the violence is cute in a brutish sort of way. It's very easy to get into with enough adrenaline-activating action to keep you interested for several hours of intensive ball brawling. Speedball 2 will join your collection as one of those games you can go back to every so-often for a quick burst of total aggression. Satisfying gameplay and sexy presentation – what more could you ask for?

ACE RATING

889



ST

Well brutal graphics and splash screens, but I was a little disappointed with the lack of any digitised screams when you pummel the opposition into the ground. Rhythm King's Nation 12 (John Foxx with some ex-Fall and Bomb the Bass characters) produced the melt-down mix on the title screen – the muffled quality of the sampled instruments actually improves the overall effect of this dance track. The game slows down slightly when players move horizontally. The version reviewed came as a pre-production disk and photocopied manual, the Bitmap Brothers told us it was 98% finished. The only things left to do were "minor tweaks" to the game.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£TBAdk	IMMINENT

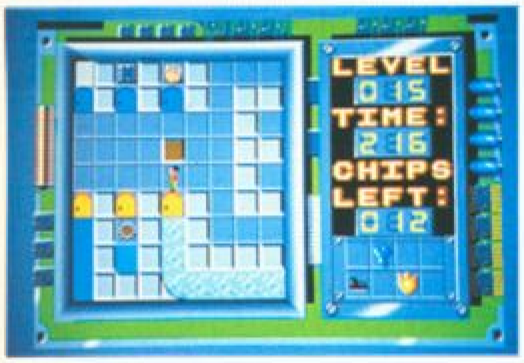
No other versions planned

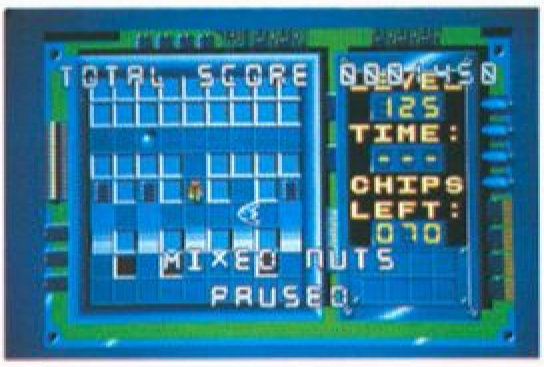
SPEEDBALL 2 -THE MOVIE ?

So if the Bitmap Brothers were to convert their latest effort onto the big screen who would they get to direct and star in the movie? Eric Matthews, the designer of Speedball 2, leaked the line-up to ACE. Dennis Hopper (Manager), David Lynch (Centre Forward), Glenda Jackson (Left Wing), Debra Winger (Right Wing), Marlon Brando (Left Midfield), Rutger Hauer (Centre Midfield), Jack Nicholson (Right Midfield), Charlie Sheen (Left Defence), Norman Tebbit (Right Defence), Robbie Cultrane (Goal). In keeping with the cyberpunk feel of the game, Ridley Scott – the director of Blade Runner and Alien – would direct. More surprising is the Bitmap Brothers choice for scriptwriter... Alan Bennett(?) Nation 12 would provide the soundtrack and the whole thing would be filmed in the (reconstructed) Albert Hall and on-location in Bromley. Remember you read it first in ACE!

From portable console to the home computer. US GOLD wonder if you can spot the Lynx?

CHIP'S CHALLENGE


AMIGA - There's an old piano and they play it hot behind the green door. But where is it, Shaky?


ATARI ST - Vive la difference! (In fact, there's none at all between Amiga and ST versions.)

Chip McCallahan is the All-American computer nerd. Desperate for acceptance into the Bit-Busters computer club (and a chance to get in the luscious Melinda's good books) he accepts their entrance challenge of umpteen levels of puzzle action.

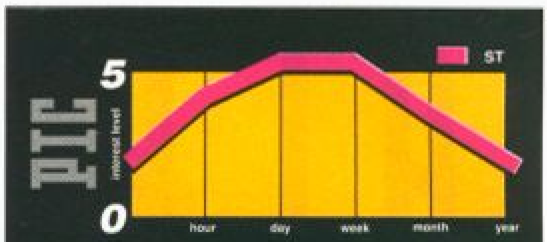
The aim of each level is to find the hidden computer chips and use them to allow access to the transporter to the next level. But there's much more to the game than just running around a maze: there are deadly rivers, fire pits and bombs to avoid; switches that operate traps; bizarre (and Chip-hungry) monsters to escape; slidy icy paths; doors that need unlocking; and other perils too numerous to mention.

Each level has its own password so you can skip ones you've completed. You don't have lives - you can plug away at the level as long as you like, but when you die you have to start again from the beginning. Die on one level too many times and you'll be asked whether you want to try the next level, so there's no fear of getting stuck.

● **David Upchurch**

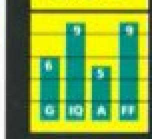
SECRETS OF THE LYNX!

Owners of Chip's Challenge on the Lynx, Atari's portable colour console, should try the password 'MAND'. The screen will go blank, then start generating that fractal phenomenon, the Mandelbrot Set. It takes a while to fully form (although significantly faster than the ST or Amiga, thanks to the console's custom maths chips). You can fiddle about with it using the joypad and the buttons - explore and enjoy!



Your jaw won't exactly hit the floor when you load it up - like most puzzlers it's the game that matter, not the graphics. The first few levels are clever tutorials that prepare you for the challenge ahead - and what a challenge! Each of the 144 levels is very different in flavour and solution, and they should keep even the smartest player going for a long, long time.

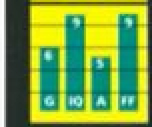
ACE RATING
835



AMIGA

The graphics and sound are, frankly, dull, but they serve their purpose. The different levels exhibit a huge amount of fiendish imagination in their lay-out, and the amount of variety in the challenges is remarkable. Recommended for all puzzle fans.

ACE RATING
835



ATARI ST

Nothing more to say - identical to the Amiga in just about every respect.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	TBA	Jan 1991
ATARI ST	TBA	Jan 1991

No other versions planned

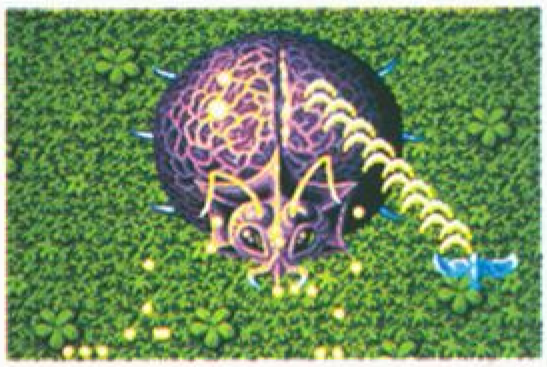
WINGS OF DEATH

Thalion get in a flap, but will you?

Wings of Death is yet another triumph of programming skill over imagination - in other words, the designers have spent so much time making the scrolling smooth, the graphics colourful and the sound effects impressive that they haven't spent a second thinking about the actual gameplay.

For what it's worth, *Wings of Death* slightly resembles the coin-op *Dragon Spirit*; it's a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up in which you, transformed into the shape of a series of magical flying creatures, take on the forces of evil in search of the witch whose spell can return you to your human shape.

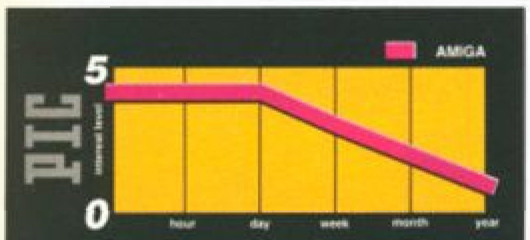
Starting life as an insect, the tokens left by blasted monsters transform you into a bat, eagle, dragon or gryphon, each with its own special weapon. Other icons increase your speed, energy and score, explode all the enemies on the screen, activate auto-fire or launch useful Destroyer Drones or self-guiding Hunter Drones.


This beetle's latest hit could prove to be your last! It definitely doesn't love you, yeah, yeah, yeah!

Watch out for the Skull icon, which saps your energy and weapon status.

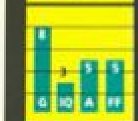
The biggest problem with *Wings of Death* is that there isn't one jot of originality; the dragons, gryphons and fireballs could just as well be spaceships, aliens and lasers, or fighters, bombers and bullets from any one of a hundred shoot-'em-ups. The action's fast and furious, but I doubt whether you'll be absorbed for long.

● **Chris Jenkins**



Attractive intro screens and enjoyable music get Wings off to a good start, but despite nice design and animation nothing can cover up the basic lack of originality. Multiple weapons, end-of-level guardians, and even changing shapes have been done to death!

ACE RATING
598



AMIGA

Good use of the Amiga's hardware scrolling to provide a smooth flight, but on the graphics side the ST origins come across too clearly. Sound, though, is excellent, with music, speech and sound effects well integrated.

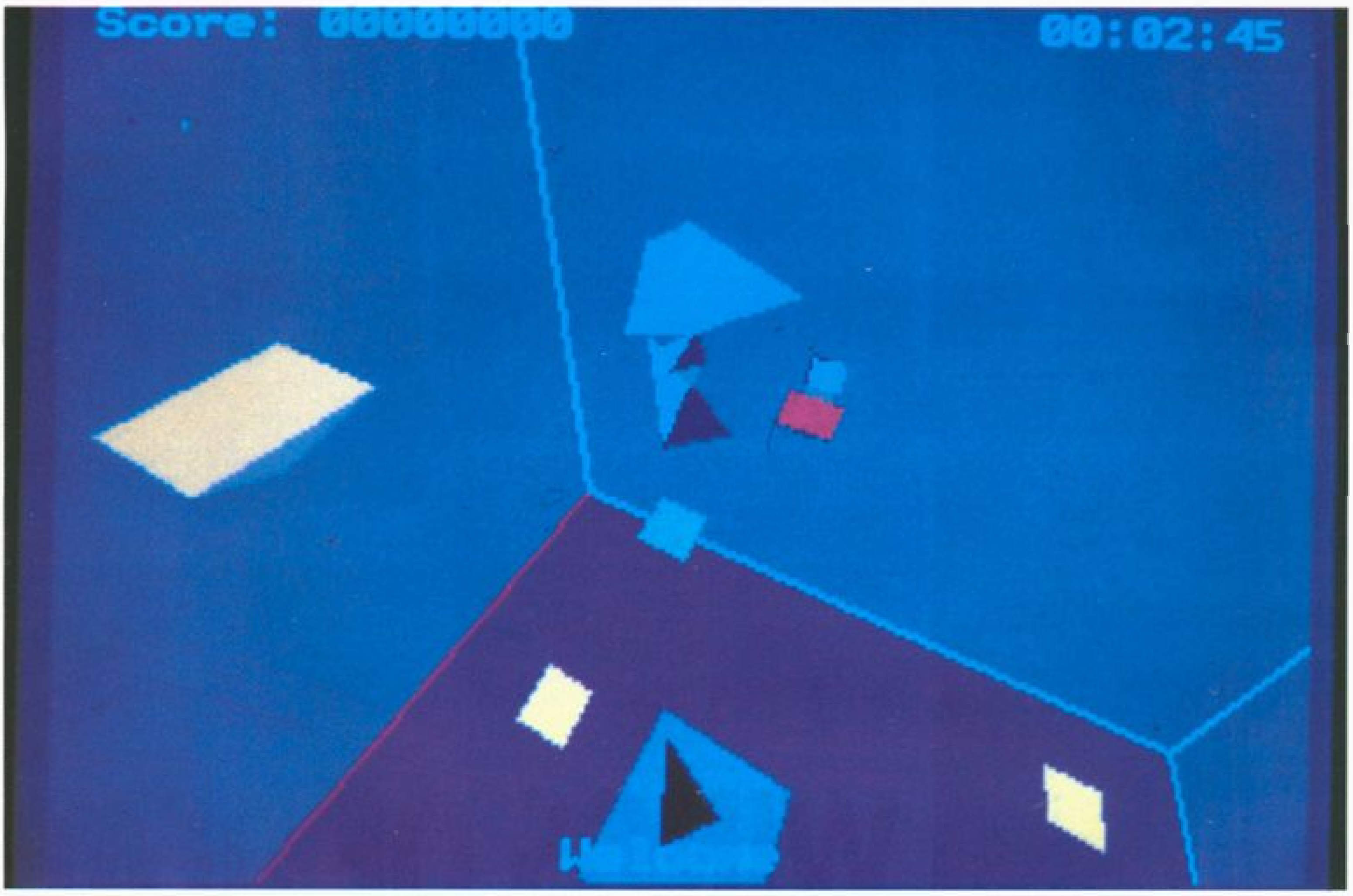
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£19.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£19.99	IMMINENT

No other versions planned

ALPHA WAVES

They claim it'll calm your soul, awaken your creativity and soothe your fevered psyche. INFOGRAMES' medicine show hits the road



Adrift in a New Age polygon world. Guide your craft across the floor to the bounce tiles. Bounce from tile to platform toward the exit.

Your passport to a new world : virtual reality". What nonsense the French talk. *Alpha Waves* is about as akin to a virtual reality experience as catching a bus.

And as if this wasn't enough, you've got an 'Emotion Mode' in the game that is supposed to bring about certain states of mind. Just a couple of games of *Alpha Waves* and you'll find yourself, so Infogrames claim, "developing creativity", in "ecstasy", receiving "spiritual opening" and "revitalising".

All this from a game involving a bouncy set of polygons and some coloured platforms.

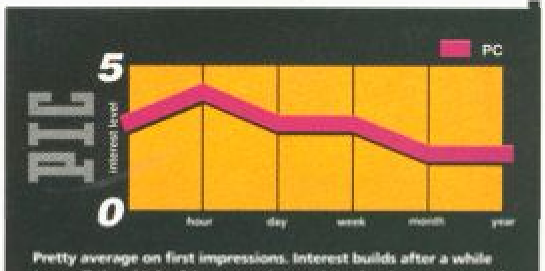
On a more positive note – and a lot more down to earth – *Alpha Waves*, when played in 'Arcade mode' is an ingenious and pleasing puzzle game, with a responsive central character and forgiving gameplay. It's a thoroughly programmed and entertaining 3D graphic toy.

The aim of the game is to explore a maze of 250 rooms. Crossing each room is a puzzle. The exits are usually suspended above the ground, and can only be reached by bouncing off an airborne platform. The longer you stay on a platform, the higher you will bounce. Left and right will rotate the direction your character is facing, while up and down offers an alternate camera view. Pressing space causes your character to move forward.

If it all sounds a little dull, don't be fooled. It's good fun. The 3D coding and the semi-intelligent camera angles make *Alpha Waves* really quite an entertaining game. There's a time limit, preventing too much dithering around, each level offers at least a variation on the theme. Some of the later stages (like Platforms – yes, they're all named) change completely, forcing a different approach.

Aside from the unforgivable nonsense about virtual reality and psyche-warping "properties", *Alpha Waves* is an amusing romp. But so much energy and space has been expended – including the daft Mind-o-tron – it will probably only serve as a bit of light relief from "proper" games.

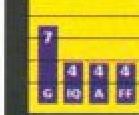
● **Jim Douglas**



Pretty average on first impressions. Interest builds after a while to an all-time high of 4 once you've got into the character control. Your attention will begin to lapse, though and *Alpha* will have difficulty keeping your interest after the second week.

ACE RATING

600



IBM PC

Needless to say, the faster the machine, the better the game. Users without a decent graphics card will find little to excite them, since the whole premise revolves around, well, lots of bright colours etc. There's some slightly uninspiring but reassuringly hypnotic sound if you've got an Ad Lib card – but it becomes annoyingly frantic as the time limit runs out.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC £24.99 OUT NOW

No other versions planned

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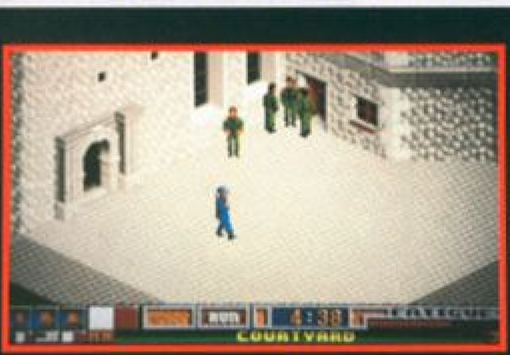
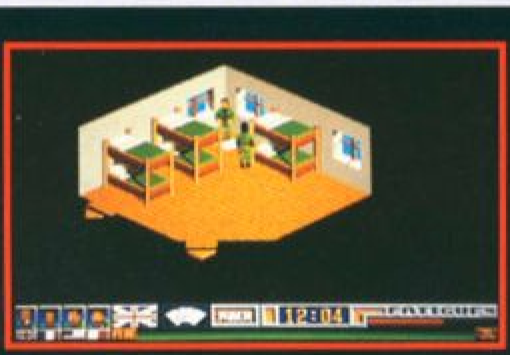
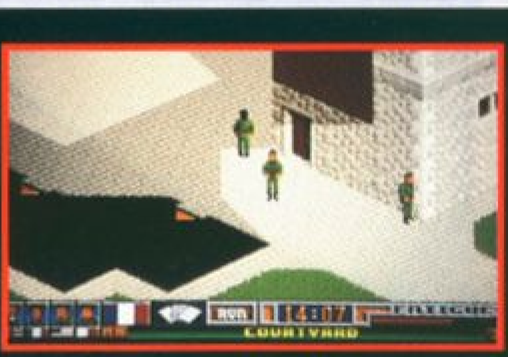
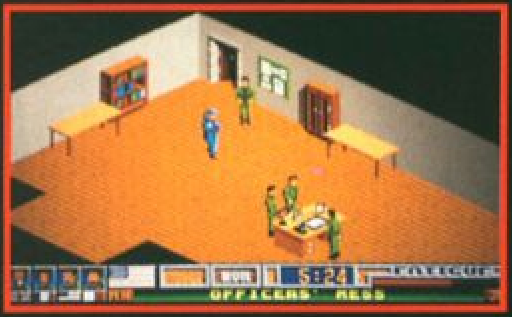
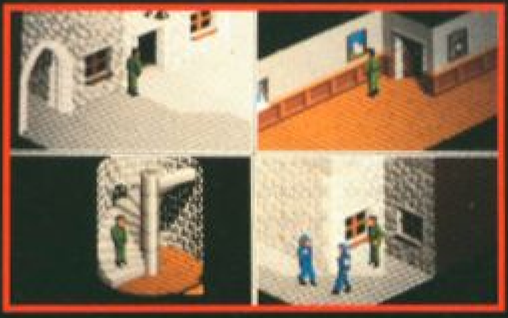
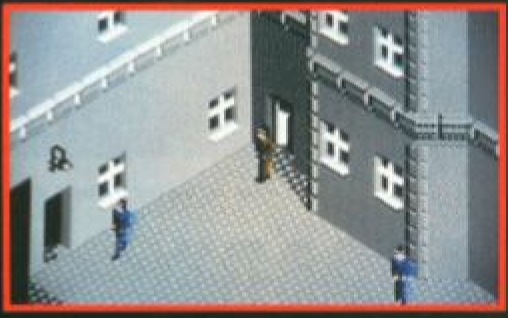


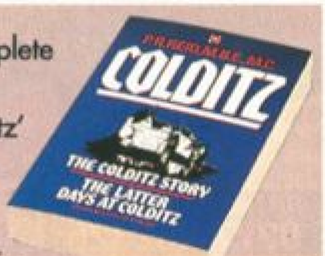





OFFICERS' MESS



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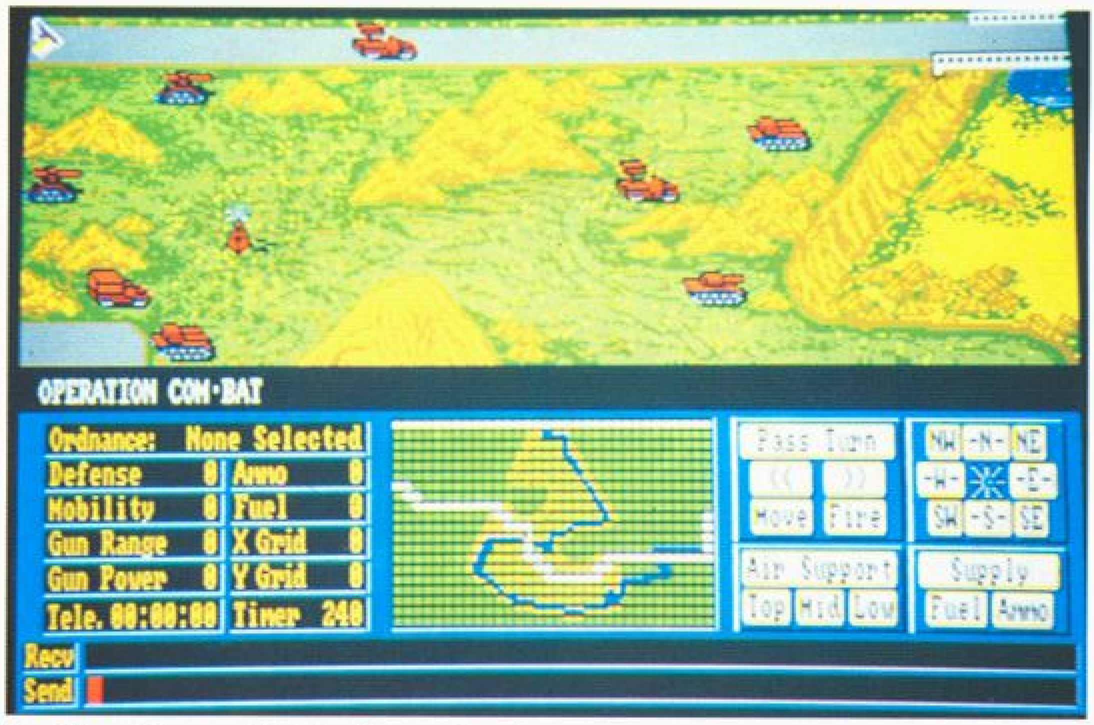
OPERATION COM•BAT

Tanks for the memory from ELECTRONIC ZOO/ MERIT SOFTWARE



Ordnance: None Selected
Defense 0
Ammo 0
Mobility 0
Fuel 0
Gun Range 0
X Grid 0
Gun Power 0
Y Grid 0
Tele. 00:00:00
Timer 240

Your window on the war - graphics view on top, control panel below

Peace and goodwill to all men (and women) as you lob a few high-ex armour piercing shells in the direction of that reindeer-drawn sleigh. Yup, *Operation Com•bat* is very much a seasonal release – if you're as much a homicidal maniac as I am.

It's also the thinking man's shoot-'em-up. You control a number of tanks and artillery, each of which occupies one square on a 32 x 20 battle-field grid. Your aim is to destroy the enemy's headquarters while defending your own.

The screen is split into roughly two halves. The top is a graphic map of about one-sixth of the whole battlefield, while the bottom is a control panel, which shows a tactical map of the whole battlefield and your positions on it, plus icons to control all game functions. All control is by mouse.

The game is played in time-limited turns. Each turn you can move none, some or all of your vehicles and/or make them fire. Take too long and play passes automatically to your opponent. Once you've finished your turn, you have to (annoyingly) sit and wait while your opponent makes his moves.

Each vehicle is differentiated by various ratings, such as movement and firing range (how far you can travel and lob a shell), gun power (how much damage it can inflict on others), armour rating (how much damage it can take) and fuel level (which decreases as you move and has to be topped up by supply trucks).

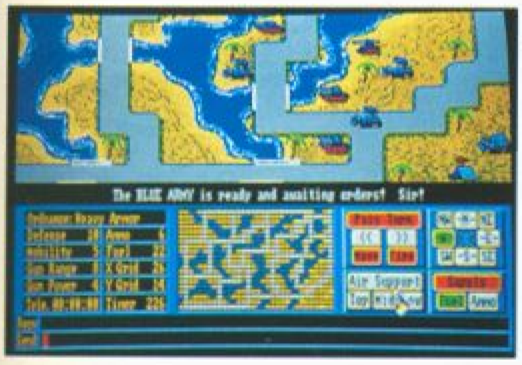
Moving a vehicle is easy; click on it on the graphics screen or the tactical map (whereupon the view on the graphics screen will flick to that vehicle), then click elsewhere on the graphics screen and, provided that position is in range, the vehicle trundles there. Firing is likewise a case of clicking on the control panel to point the gun in the right direction and then clicking on fire.

There's also an option to call in air support, which uses up a whole turn. The 'plane flies across the screen, strafing all enemy vehicles in its path and sends back recce information on enemy positions – very valuable just before that big push!

Before a game you can change various parameters from pull down menus, such as whether shots will hit just the enemy or the first thing blocking their path (including your troops), the number of times a vehicle can fire in one turn, and how long a turn lasts. In addition there are four scenarios, which alter the number of different vehicles types under your control, and six battlefield types, adding further complications.

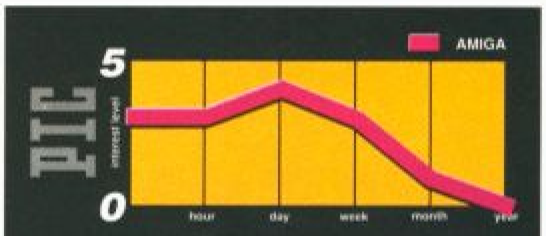
Operation Com•bat looks very dated, especially compared to recent strategy games such as *Powermonger*. The best thing about the game (especially from the 'phone companies point of view) is the option to play against someone else over the 'phone lines via modems.

● **David Upchurch**



The BLUE ARMY is ready and awaiting orders! Sir!

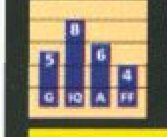
The Archipelago Battlefied is tough



The aesthetics are functional rather than impressive. The four scenarios and six terrains provide a pretty broad challenge, but only for the committed wargames fan.

ACE RATING

685



AMIGA

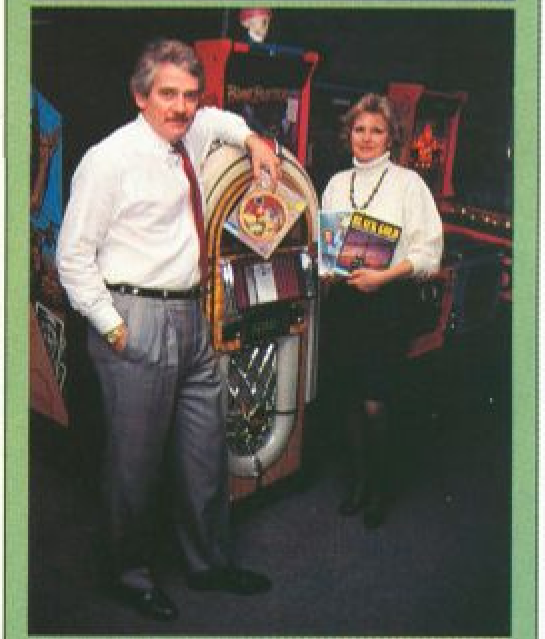
The aesthetics are functional rather than impressive. Sound effects are a little better, with some nice digitised booms and engine sounds. Wargamers will probably get some enjoyment (although experienced players may be frustrated by the simplicity and lack of detail), but this game isn't going to attract the uninitiated.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	JAN '91
APPLE MAC	£29.99	JAN '91

No other versions planned

LET'S GO TO THE ZOO!

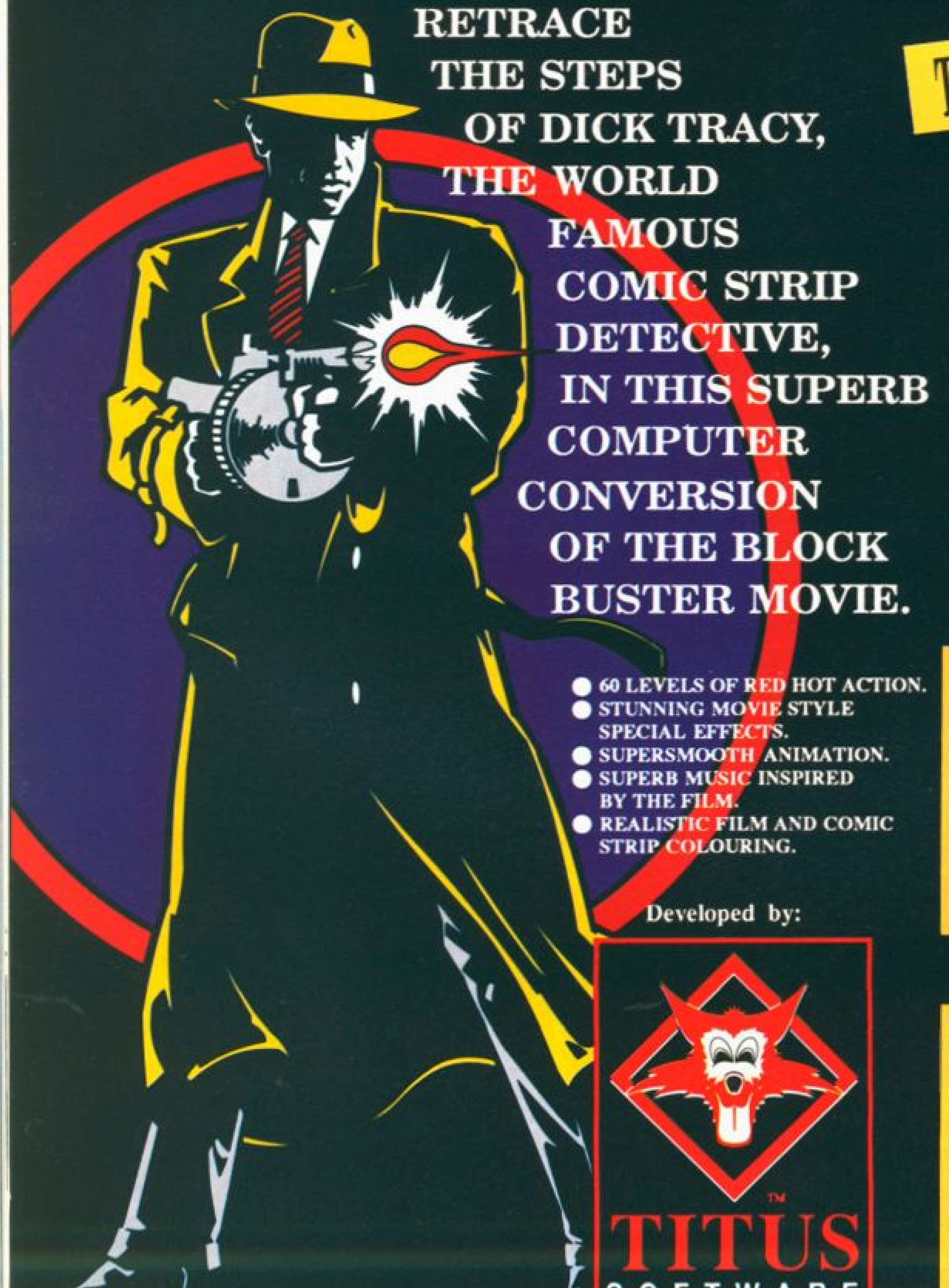


OK, so *Operation Com•Bat* isn't going to top the Christmas charts this year, but Zoo have got some nifty products up their sleeves for 1991. Don't miss next issue, when we visit their US base in Baltimore, Maryland and meet Dick Todd and Debbie Music (pictured above). Together with UK boss Stewart Bell, they'll be identifying some of the beasts that will be let out of the cage in the next few months.

AMIGA - ATARI ST - PC / PS - AMSTRAD CPC / CPC+ / GX 4000 - C 64 - SPECTRUM

DICK TRACY

THIS TIME THEY'RE OUT TO GET HIM!



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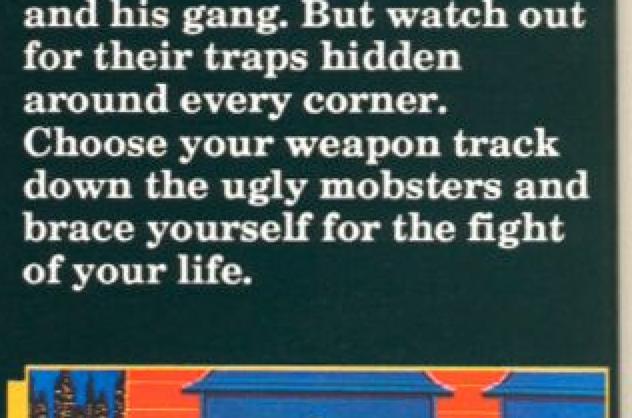

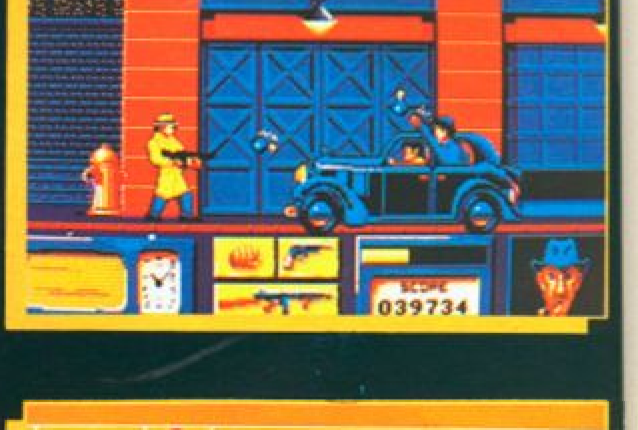

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ATF II

In the 21st Century, wars will be fought with Advanced Tactical Fighters. And the ground will look like a chessboard. Difficult to believe? Not after you've played ATF II.

Programs finding themselves under the "strategy action" banner generally sit rather uneasily in gamesworld. Most, in their efforts to please both shoot-em-up fans and strategy enthusiasts tend to fall between the two stools, failing to cater adequately for either camp.

ATF II certainly doesn't overcome the problem completely, but comes closer to finding a happy medium than most. Your aim (refreshingly simple for a change) is to carry out hit and run missions on enemy installations before returning back to the allied base.

Before and after each mission a briefing session breaks down the strength and nature of the enemy forces as well as your most recent performance. The success of your missions determining how well the rest of the allies fare. A thoroughly useless effort on your part will leave lots of enemy forces free to defend against allied tank attacks.

Your mission begins in the aircraft hangar. Here the necessary rockets (air to air and air to ground) are available along with gun ammo and, of course, fuel.

Through the take off stage - push the throttle open with the mouse and pull back on the joystick - and you're airborne. A bank of indicators contain all the necessary information for your mission. A communications link back to the lads in the bunker keeps you fed with information. The most important figures to keep an eye on is the position and distance of the next enemy target. Once a target has been located, you can simply follow the Heads Up Display. You'll be lead right to it.

In similar style to the original ATF landscape, the ground is patterned checker-board style with sprites depicting oncoming planes. While the speed of the 3D scroll is reasonable, the animations of the sprites leaves a little to be desired, consisting only of a basic sprite and it's banked left/right equivalent.

The nature of the game is such that most of your flying time will be spent simply travelling towards your target and then back to base. The dogfights which occur along the route simply serve to hinder you and distract you from your intended course.

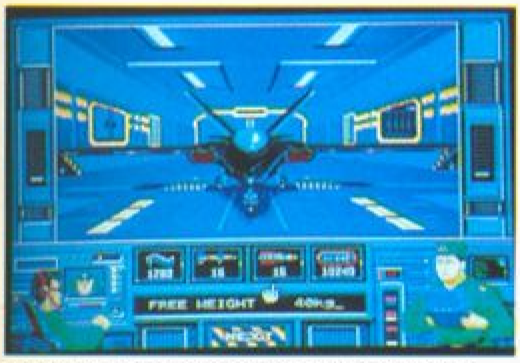
The machine gun will despatch most of the enemy fighters, but using air-to-air missiles is occasionally a wise choice, as they lock on and pursue their targets, allowing you to wheel round and attack something else.

Further hindrance is offered by anti-aircraft installations firing surface-to-air missiles at you. Warning of these deadly attacks comes via a warbling siren and flashing message. Clicking the mouse-controlled hand icon on the message activates the missile jamming system. Should your jamming system become damaged in combat, it is possible to outmanoeuvre the missile.

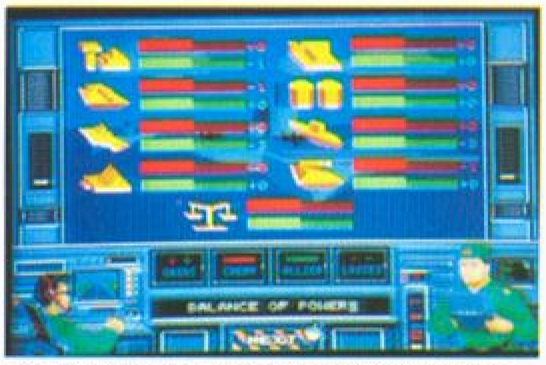
Your location and approximate direction is represented by a little black plane icon on the blocky "large scale" map. Incoming jets and landbases features such as tanks are also shown on the map. The closer you are to your chosen target, the more ferocious the defence becomes. Having completed a particular stage of the larger mission, it's time to return to base for aircraft repairs, refuelling and rearming.

The problem with ATF II is that it's difficult to know who it will appeal to. Hard-nosed strategists probably won't find enough figure analysis and plotting to keep them occupied for long, while zappers will probably be frustrated by the lengtly (some may say slogging) flying sequences in between the action stages.

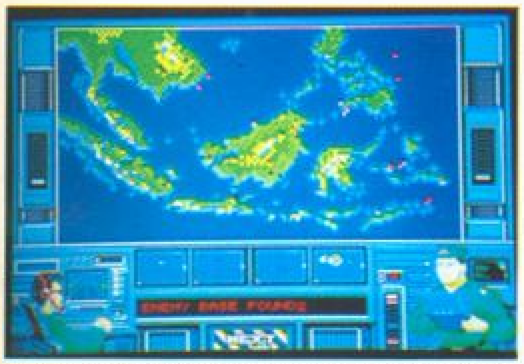
● **Jim Douglas**



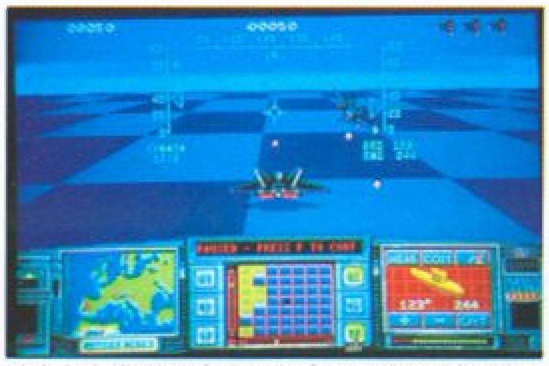
Hangar-ing out. Equip your Advanced Tactical Fighter with rockets, bullets and gas before taking to the skies.



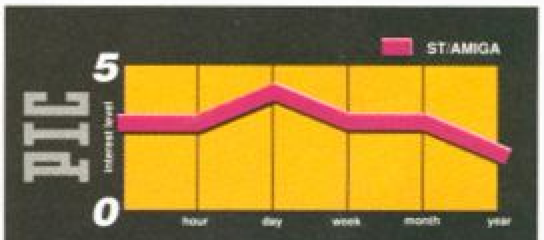
The Balance of Power. The green bars indicate allied forces, and the others signify the Red Menace.



The World at War. An overview of the current situation, colour coded to indicate allied and enemy strongholds.

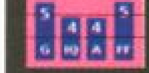


Bogies at half-past twelve! Loose a few rounds once the cross-hairs highlight the enemy jet and he'll pose no problem.



ATF's semi-stategy orientation means that there's a bit of fiddling around to be done before the game can start in earnest. The most fun will be had after a day or so, when you're beginning to make successful missions and you can see your victories effecting the war effort. After this point, though, the appeal is likely to wane.

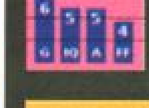
ACE RATING
680



ATARI ST

ATF works pretty well as an ST game. The 3D scroll is perfectly fine, and all of the features found on the other versions are included. The music and sound effects however aren't very good; the dreadul white-noise whine of the engines is frankly annoying and the sound made by your ATF craft when it takes a hit from a rocket is little more than a muffled beep.

ACE RATING
690



AMIGA

The sound on the Amiga version is more rounded than on the ST. The rocket sound effects sound more like they originated on a battle ground than the ST's tin can factory. The detail and colouring on the sprites is slightly better too, but apart from these, there isn't really anything between the two versions.

RELEASE.DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

What did you say, ACTIVISION? "Izzy, wizzy, go buy *Spindizzy*!"

Around 1986 an Atari game called *Marble Madness* hit the arcades. It featured a rolling marble (surprise!) that you had to guide around several levels of isometric-3D mazes. The animation and sound were an absolute treat for the eyes and ears, and it wasn't long before programmers were trying to emulate it on the home computers.

Arguably the best variant was *Spindizzy*, written by Paul Shirley, which decided to go for a more puzzle-based game than the race-against-the-clock nature of its inspiration. The action took place on a huge map of interconnecting flick screens. Highly addictive, it started off difficult, then became impossible!

Sadly, Spinny (as it was known to its many admirers) never saw the light of day on the 16-bitters. But now here comes new, improved *Spindizzy Worlds*! You control the spinningtop-like GERALD (Geographic Environmental Reconnaissance And Land-Mapping Device – not at all contrived, eh?) in a quest to explore two planetary systems, called (strangely) Easy and Hard.

Easy System contains just six minor planets and one major planet, while Hard contains twenty-four minor and one major. All the minor planets must be fully investigated before you can have a crack at the major one. The minor planets can be investigated in any order.

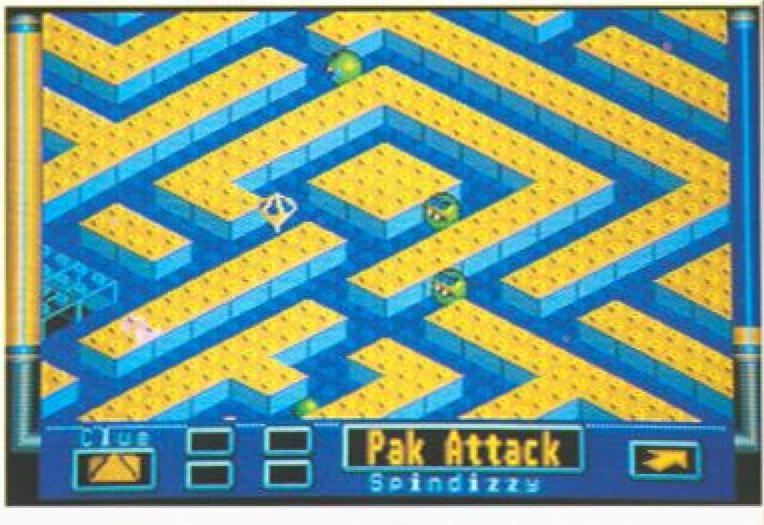
Each planet contains several levels of isometric-3D scrolling terrain. The basic aim is to find the warp square that will take GERALD to the next level. Typically, this is behind a door that will only raise when you've found every crystal on a level, and they usually reside in the most inaccessible of places. Having completed all the levels, GERALD races against the clock on a Bonus level before moving on to the next planet.

To reach some of the more dizzying heights (ho,ho!) you may have to trip switches, the effects of which you only find out by trial and error. Amongst other things they can remove blocks, activate lifts or form ramps and platforms from thin air. Some switches turn off the effects of other, so you may to activate them in a certain order to get you where you want to go. Fortunately the windows at the bottom of the screen give you graphic clues to puzzle solutions.

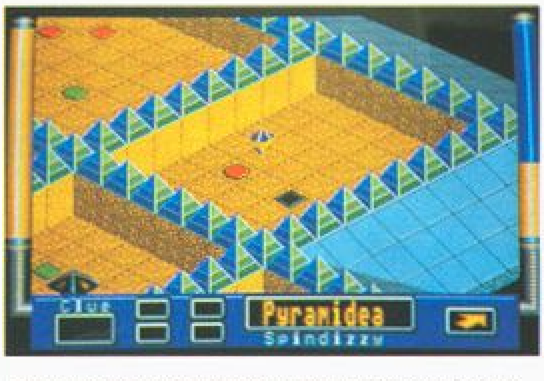
GERALD is pretty fragile; falling too far or bumping into the marauding natives of some worlds will deplete his meagre energy. If he loses all his energy, then it's Game Over, man! Fortunately the crystals and fuel pills help keep Gerald going.

Control takes a while to get used to; GERALD tends to slide around quite wildly at first. Practice makes perfect, though, and you'll be glad you made the effort. The blend of puzzle-solving and arcade-thrills is perfect. Definitely deserving of success.

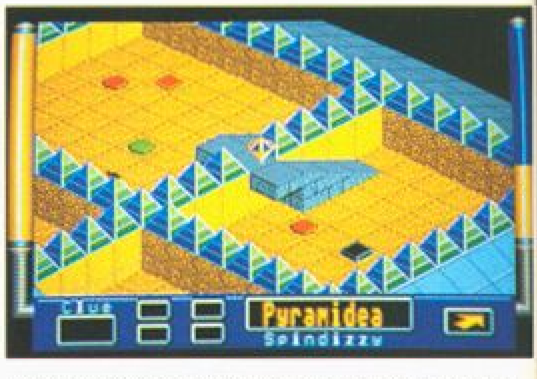
● **David Upchurch**



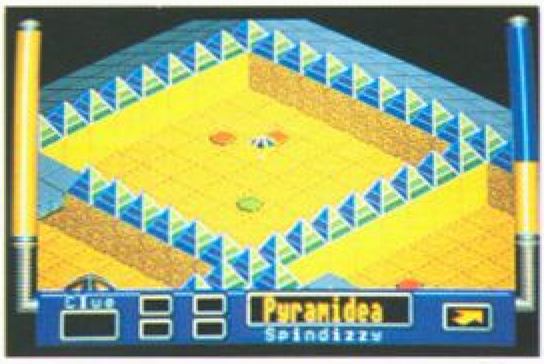
ATARI ST - Hmm, this looks very familiar. Find those crystals and get out - fast!



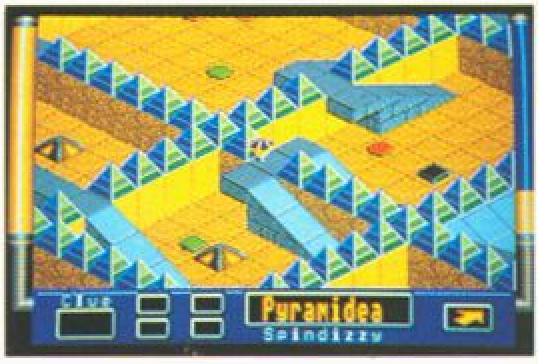
AMIGA - Inside a pyramid on Pyramidea World. How the heck do I get out of here..?



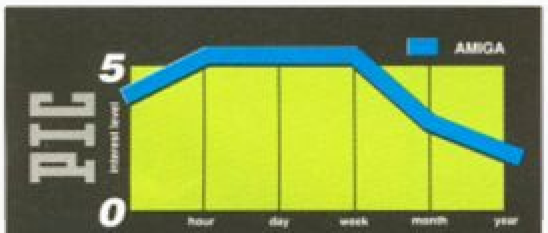
...Ah-ha! Touching the red button forms a handy ramp to the next cell. Up the slipperry slope and...



...Whoops! That red square makes the ramp disappear! Luckily the red button gets it back - but what does the green one do..?



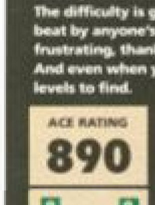
...I see, it forms a new ramp in the cell I started from, leading to a fuel-restoring crystal and more puzzle headaches!



Very attractive front end (especially the rotating world selector screen) leads into a beautifully presented and absorbing game. The difficulty is graded well, and the later worlds are tough to beat by anyone's standard. However, the game never becomes frustrating, thanks to the opportunity to skip around the worlds. And even when you've seen 'em all there are still secret bonus levels to find.

ACE RATING

890

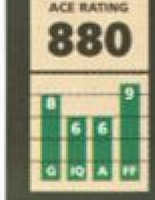


AMIGA

Graphics are bright,colourful and well-designed. The play-area scrolls smoothly in all directions, and the isometric-3D effect is very clever. The variety of challenges (sometimes puzzle-solving, sometimes racing against the clock, always teetering on the edge of a platform) make for a long-lasting game that is both fun and satisfying to play. Highly recommended.

ACE RATING

880



'ATARI ST

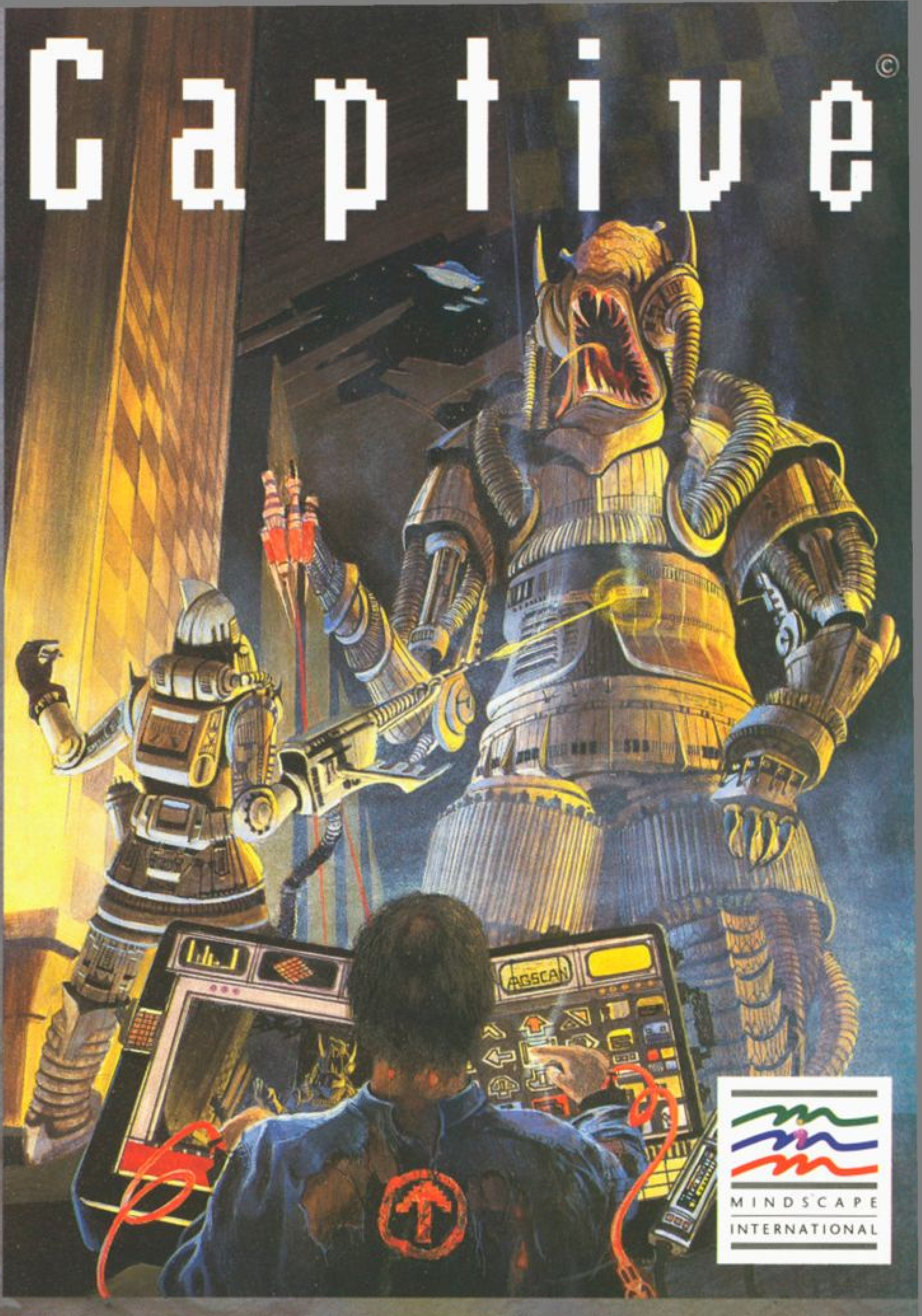
Pretty much identical to the Amiga in every respect save the scrolling, which is smooth vertically but 'flicks' horizontally. This can be a little disorientating but not enough to spoil the high-rise jinks. If you want to exercise your brain and your reactions, then this is the one for you.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

Captive ©



The quest for freedom!

When you can't remember who you are, where you are and even what year it is, then you know trouble cannot be too far away...

*Held **Captive** for two hundred years in an orbiting space prison for a crime you didn't commit, you are desperate to escape from your electronic gaol.*

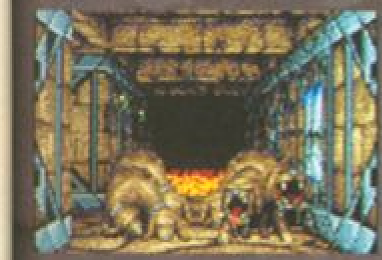
Armed only with a briefcase computer found in the corner of your cell, you start sending out electronic SOS calls to the battling world outside.

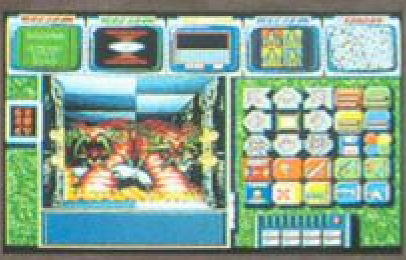
Eventually you find a motley crew of four droids ready to help bring about your escape..

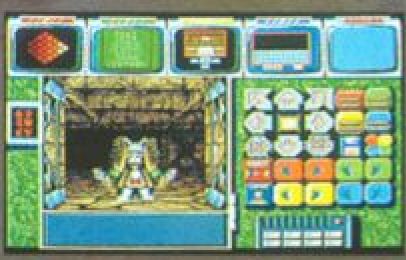
..so begins your quest for freedom!

Available for Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC and compatibles.
£24.99

MINDSCAPE
INTERNATIONAL







Actual screen shots

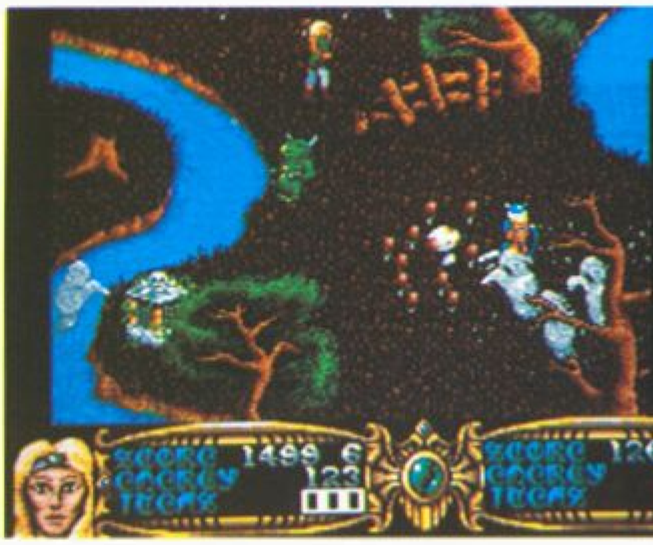
- *Ace rated 930!*
- *C&VG Hit: 94%*

ACE RATED

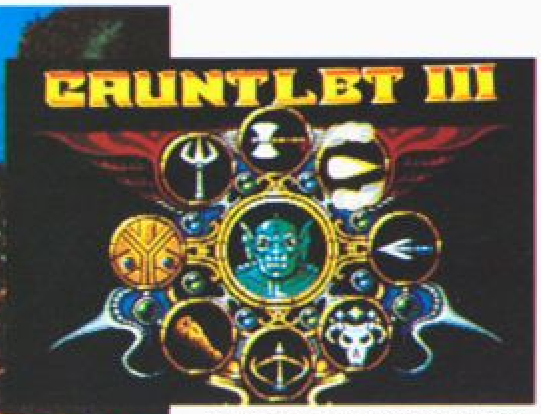
C+VG HIT!

M I N D S C A P E

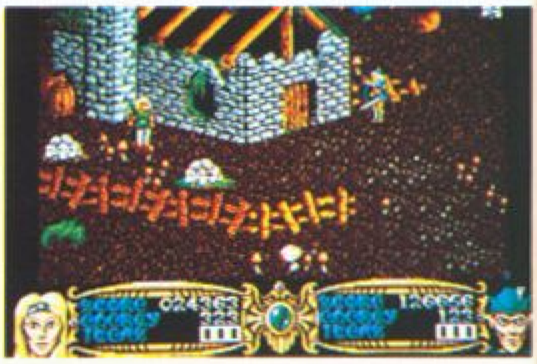
For further information on Mindscape products and your local dealer, contact:
The Coach House, Hooklands Estate, Scaynes Hill, West Sussex RH17 7NG. Tel. (044 486) 761



The 3D landscapes are really quite far removed from the spartan corridors *Gauntlet* players are used to



Player 1 has already selected his character (hence the closed screen). Player two opts for Lizard Man



Once you've got the door open, new levels can be explored

GAUNTLET 3

GOLDEN

US GOLD are about to assault us with two new games: a 3D version of *Gauntlet*

And as the dark lord Sequellon beat thrice on the stone of Followup with his mystic staff, the world of Gauntlet and all its inhabitants took on depth and behold; a third dimension was bestowed upon the land.

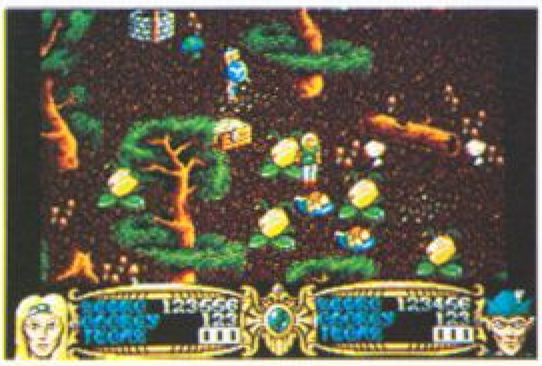
If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise. The characters you once knew only as flat sprites have been fleshed out and tooled up; their previously barren straight-walls environment has been replaced by beautiful landscapes with dry stone walls, hedges and fences. And the outrageous violence from previous games is... just the same!

It's nearly two years since Gauntlet II graced our screens. Indeed, few of us were expecting to see another version of the classic coin-op but suddenly, as if by magic, it's nearly finished. Software Creations have been working on the 3D version since the summer, and it should be on the street for easter 91.

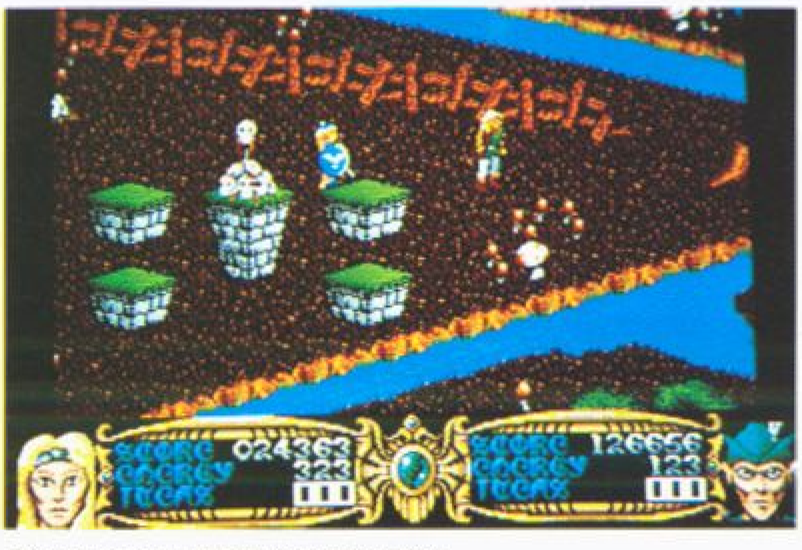
The premise of the Gauntlet games is simple; your band of warriors (two active members selected from a potential eight in this version) must battle thousands of monsters and stay alive as long as possible, collecting treasure and amassing points. Monsters are produced from generators; horrible little cages surrounded by skulls. Brave players can take the fight to the enemy and destroy generators, stemming the flow of some monsters. Little has changed for this 3D rendition.

Gauntlet's appeal hinges largely on the sense of overwhelming odds faced by the players being chased around the mazes by hundreds of monsters. This edition will probably only feature around twenty-five monsters on screen at once, but when you bear in mind the fact that all the graphics have been substantially enlarged, and need 3D space to move in, it's easy to see how the screen will look – quite busy enough, thank you.

● Jim Douglas



Beware the Venus Flytraps! Food is there for the taking, but at what cost?



Many rivers to cross, but still no sign of any bridges

ACE PREPLAY

- High novelty value of 3D effect will offer new interest even fo players with another Gauntlet game.
- Super graphics.
- Variety of heroes available (see panel).

- Maybe not the volume of monsters that Gauntlet 1 + 2 afficionados are used to.
- Can the speed of the previous games be captured by the 3D process?

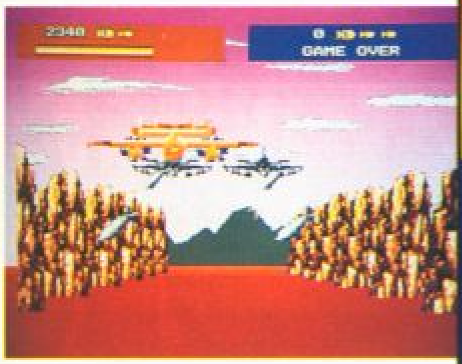
Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	Jan
ST	£24.99	Jan

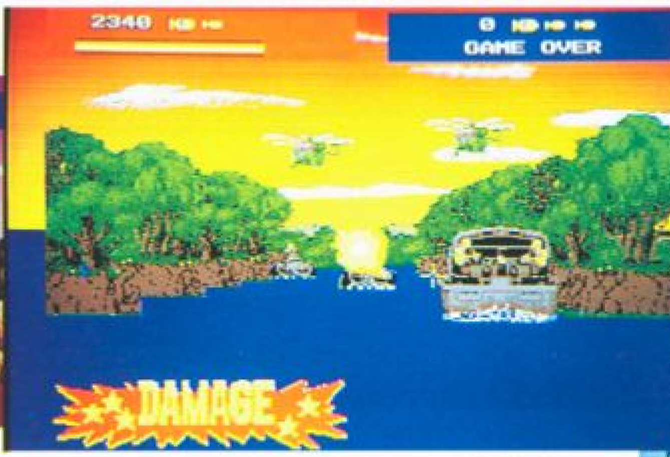
WHO YA GONNA CALL?

Each character has a particular weapon. Which will you choose?

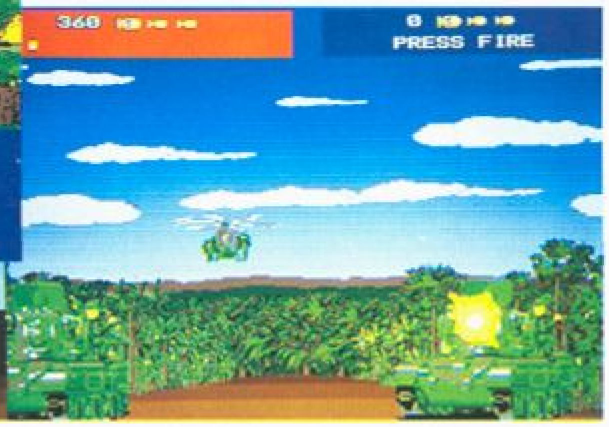
ELF – Bow and Arrow. High fire rate. Useless in a punch-up situation.
WARRIOR – Axę. Mr Tough. Not very good at firing quickly, but great at punching.
VALKYRIE – Sword. Not very good at hand to hand, reasonable fire rate.
ROCK MAN – Club. Good for bashing people, not for long distance rucks, though.
WIZARD – Not particularly spritely, but a fiend with a lightning bolt.
NEPTUNE – Trident.



On the rocky road. Shoot the falling bombs to avoid taking serious hits



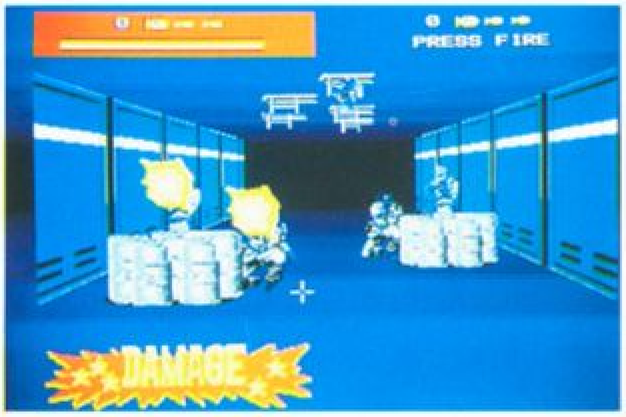
Life on the ocean waves. Hit the choppers before the bombs – they're fiendish!



By rights, players should look after their own area of the screen. Player 2 would be in serious trouble here

HORIZON

and a rotating arena of death. We checked out the pre-production versions....



Bad guys take cover behind barrels as you rocket down the corridor. Watch out for that damage!

ACE PREPLAY

- Visually exciting scrolling system.
- Grandiose violence.
- Two player team-up option.

- Speed hampered by lots of objects on screen at once.
- Highly detailed graphics, when magnified look blocky and it's tricky to distinguish boats/tanks from background foliage.

Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	Jan
ST	£24.99	Jan

LINE OF FIRE

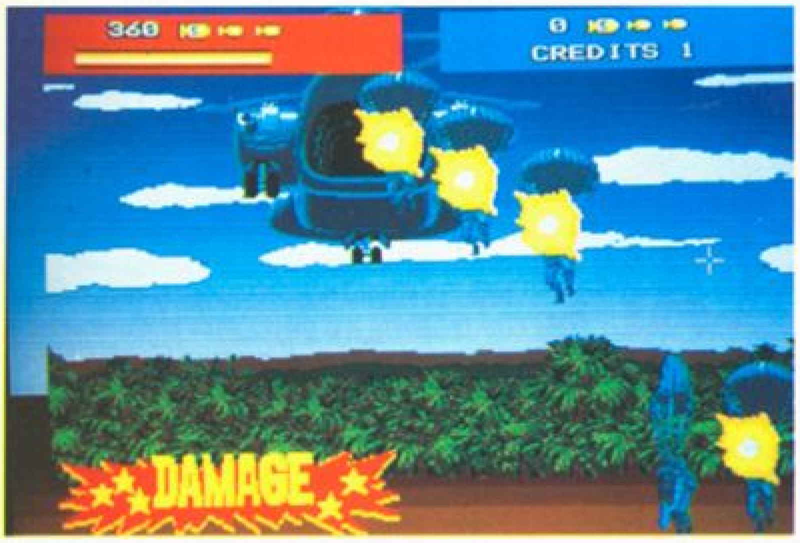
Just when you thought you'd taken your last silicon blood bath, USG come up with another butcher's assault course that will really put you in a spin...

Watching *Line of Fire*, you'd be forgiven for making an appeal to Divine Providence to spare us further versions of these infernal death-dealing shoot-outs. Some hope. Since most games of this festive season are related to machines in the arcades of Japan, it's no surprise to discover that one of US Gold's newies has more flying cartridge cases than, um, a flying cartridge case factory.

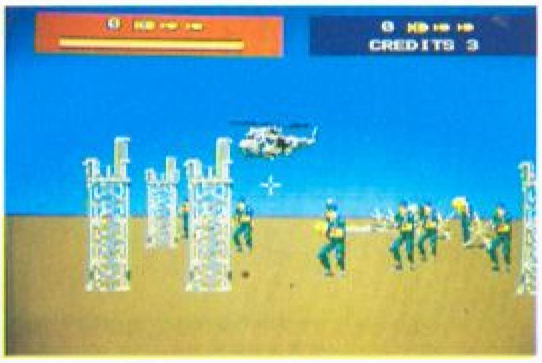
Imagine *Operation Thunderbolt*'s airplane section, with the bad guys scrolling towards you. Right. *Line of Fire* opens in almost exactly the same way, except the enemy soldiers are slightly more horrible. As the rotten-toothed, drug-crazed guerrillas endeavour to blast you to kingdom come, you (and your partner) can return fire by simply guiding a cross-hair sight around the screen and tapping the mouse button. Should the crosshair stray across a bad guy, he's dead.

The essential difference between *Line of Fire* and *Thunderbolt* is the scrolling system. Produced by Creative Materials, inventors of the revolutionary Rotoscape system, the scroll here is remarkable. As you travel (by foot, in a jeep or even in a boat) your view gradually rotates as you follow the tunnels/waterways/landcape. Rather than being a straight screen-flip, the action still continues while this scroll is in action, producing an exceptionally realistic effect.

● **Jim Douglas**

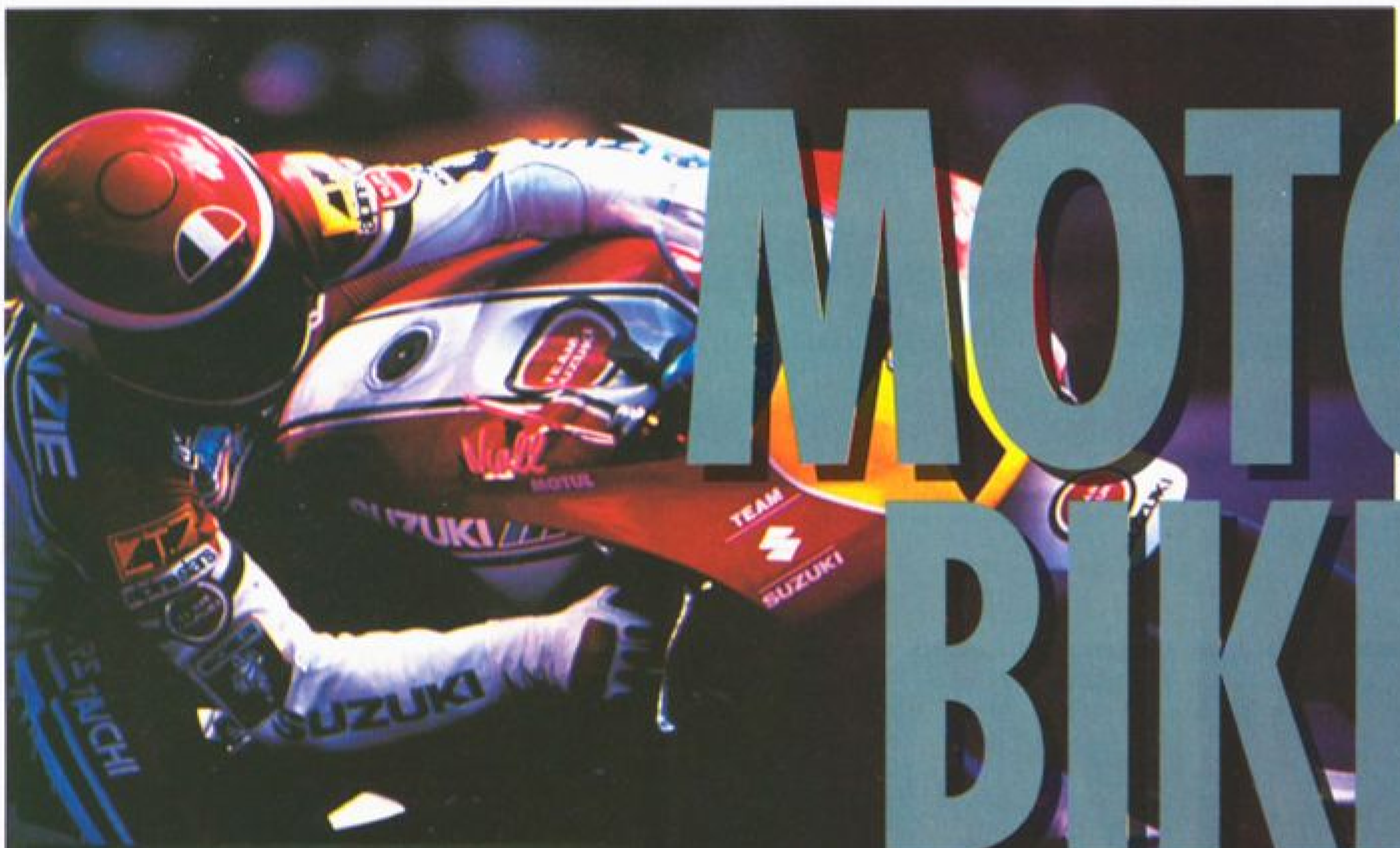


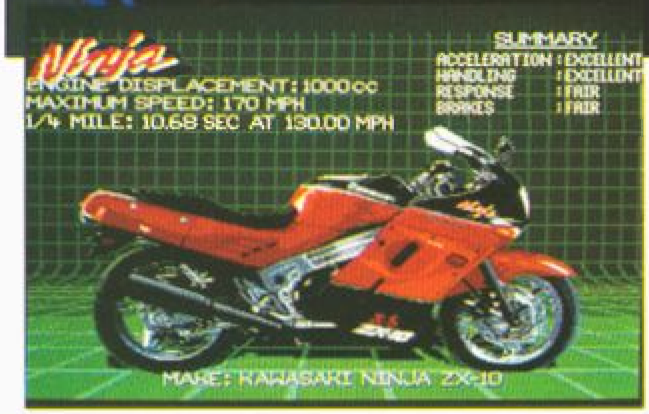
Parachuting friends of the drug lords start getting tough. Get ready for that amazing scroll routine...



The barren oilfield scene. Prioritise between numerous foot soldiers and single, heavy artillery choppers

MOTOR BIKIN'

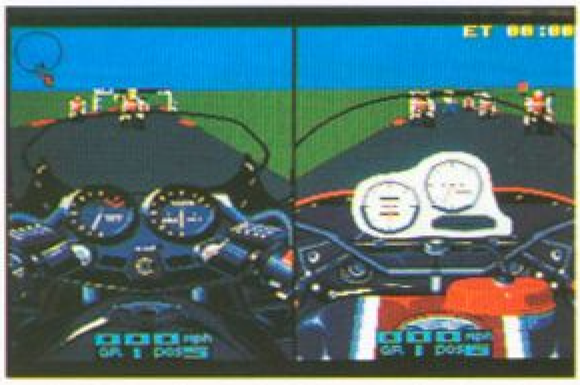



Ninja
ENGINE DISPLACEMENT: 1000cc
MAXIMUM SPEED: 170 MPH
1/4 MILE: 10.68 SEC AT 130.00 MPH

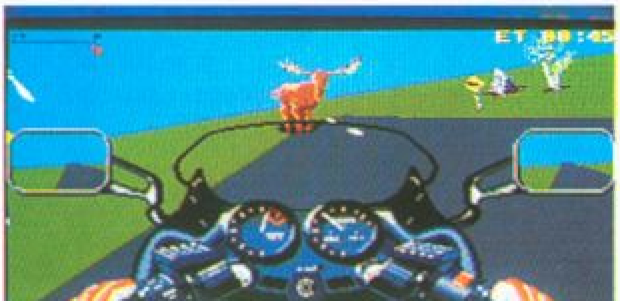
SUMMARY
ACCELERATION : EXCELLENT
HANDLING : EXCELLENT
RESPONSE : FAIR
BRAKES : FAIR

MAKE: KAWASAKI NINJA ZX-10

The Kawasaki Ninja. Top speed 170 mph, and a stonking 1000cc of power to get it there. Personally we prefer the racing green version, but you can't have everything.



On the grid in two-player mode. Racing on two from six possible bikes (notice the rev counters, farings, etc) offers lots of variety.



The glorious wing mirrors in action! To speed up the screen updates, there's an option for "intelligent" mirrors which only operate when there's a rider behind you.

ACE PREPLAY

👍	👎
● Variety of bikes and courses. ● Speed of the graphics. ● Simultaneous 2 player option.	● Some ugly sprite routines.

Release Details

A	£24.99	Dec

ULTIMATE RIDE SPEC

Bikes
Vmax, GSX R1100, RC30, Ninja ZX10, FZR 400, CBR 600

Graphics System
3D Polygon course with 180° tilting and sprites for track-side objects and obstacles.

Players
One or two players. Two player mode features split-screen.

Courses
12 Tracks: Six race tracks and six road sections from around the world. By altering the percentage of hills, hazards, rain probability, etc, it's possible to construct your own courses. Not quite a track editor; more a track preference section.

Hazards
Other bikes during the races. Police cars, trees, moose, kangaroos, sheep.

THE ULTIMATE RIDE - MINDSCAPE

Mindscape's Ultimate Ride offers six bikes and twelve courses to ride. Half the courses are real race tracks from around the world: Japan, Brazil, Australia, England and America. The other half are individually tailored road sections, with weather conditions and obstacles appropriate to the current country. In England, for example, it rains a lot of the time and there are sheep all over the road. California is populated entirely by vicious traffic cops and skateboarding numskulls.

The road sections provide some novelty slalom action for the rider who's got to grips with the bike but doesn't want to plough his way through the qualifying and race stages all the time.

The view of the outside world is shown through the helmet of the rider, so his hands and all the instruments sit neatly in the lower portion of the screen.

Each bike performs (and looks) like its real-world counterpart, with warning lights, rev counters and speedo accurately positioned and styled.

Fancy yourself as Kevin Schwantz? A pre-slide Barry Sheene? Dream of owning a muscle-bound road-eating rocket instead of your Perfect Pizza delivery bike? Softcos are currently queuing up to offer you a leather-clad knee-down adventure. We take a look at two of the hottest titles.

TEAM SUZUKI - GREMLIN

Unlike "Ride", Team Suzuki only offers the player the chance to ride one make of motorcycle. However, 186 mph from a 500cc machine is pretty serious stuff, and with the chance to ride a technically accurate computerised version of Kevin Schwantz's very own bike, what race fan could resist?

Team Suzuki, the latest of Gremlin's autosport licence tie-ins aims to offer the player a genuinely realistic simulation of the international 500cc race season.

The primary control method (still in tweaking stages) is via the mouse. Left and right obviously bank the bike left or right, while combinations of forward, back, left and right buttons are used to accelerate, brake and change through the gears.

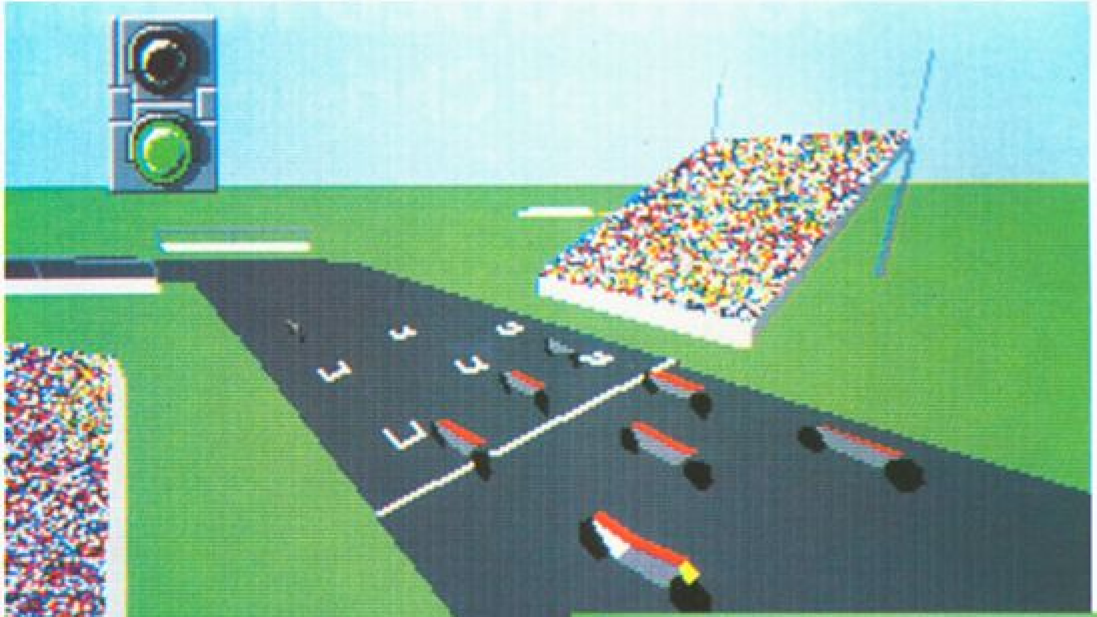
Once the player has become accomplished with the mouse, swift progress through the game is possible, but until then - and it appears that a lot of practise is necessary - it's frustrating to be denied access to the finer points of the game's appeal because of the unfriendly control method.

It should be made clear that Gremlin are including a joystick option and are revising the mouse control.

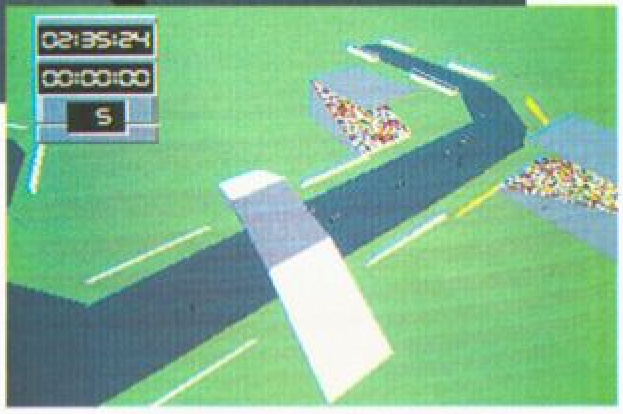
125cc and 250cc machines are also available for racing, and these lower powered machines are slightly easier to control than their muscle-bound big brother. The 125cc machine has automatic gearing for beginners.

A stat panel (top left) indicates the lap times and number of laps remaining. Each time you cross the finish line, overtake or get overtaken, your position in the race flashes onto the screen.

The 3D speed is truly impressive, and the playback facility with all the riders skittering around the racing lines of impossible bends make Suzuki look superb. The only question mark hangs over the final friendliness of the control method.



On the grid, before the tyres start to squeal. Your performance in the qualifying laps determine your start position.



Replay mode. The camera can be elevated or lowered, and automatically follows the action. Lap indicator top left relays your progress.

ACE PREPLAY

- Superb, fast polygon graphics
- Realistic races with seven world-class riders.
- Excellent TV replay.
- Joystick option.

- Over-complex mouse control.

Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	Nov
ST	£24.99	Nov
PC	£29.99	To follow

TEAM SUZUKI SPEC

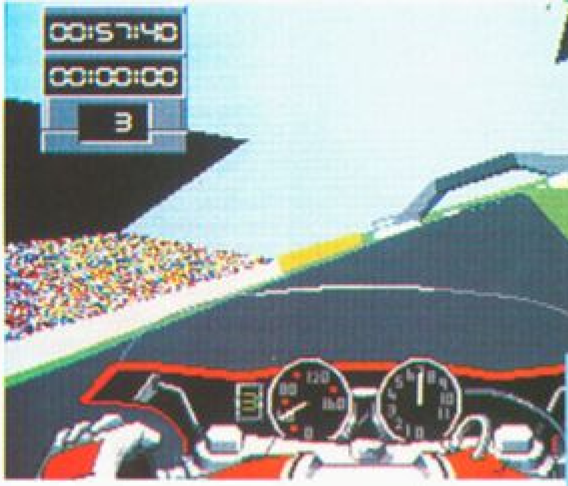
Bike:
Team Suzuki 125/250/500cc race bikes.

Graphics:
Polygon driven with sprites for bike dials 'n' controls.

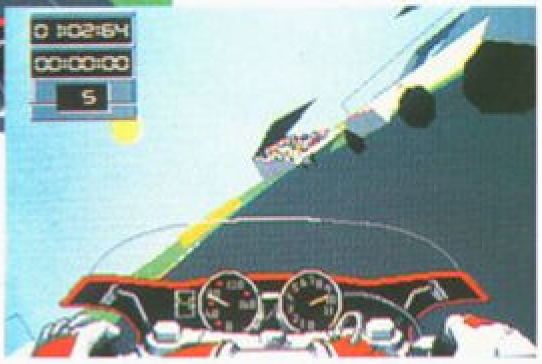
Players:
One

Courses:
16 tracks from around the world.

Hazards:
Seven other riders race against you.



You won't get anywhere going at 40mph, madam! Push forward on the mouse and change down a gear for Heaven's sake!



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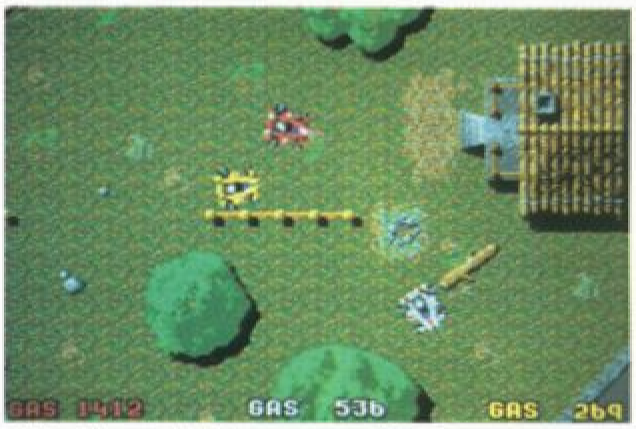
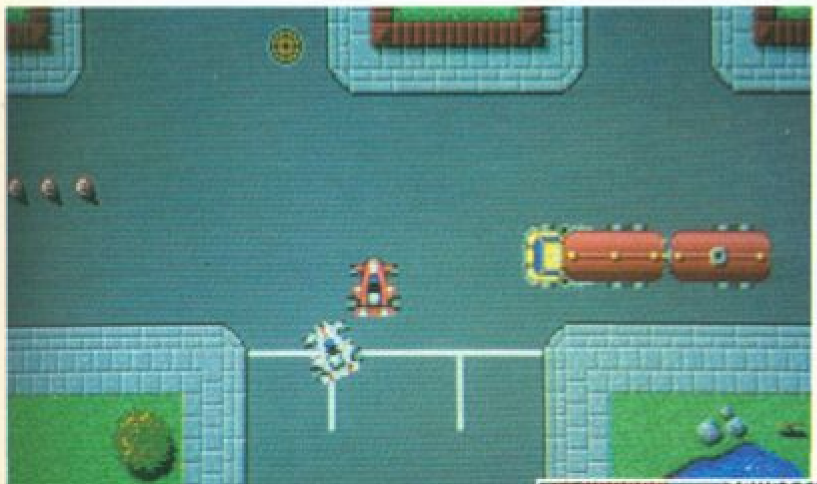
NITRO

What's that smell? PSYGNOSIS are burning rubber...

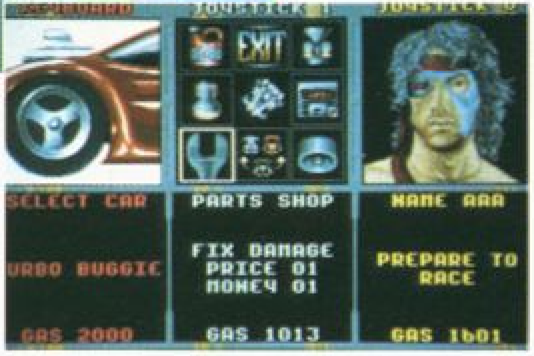
In a market packed with racing games, you've either got to do something really new or at least the same but much better to make any sort of impact. *Nitro*'s twist is that the action is viewed from overhead, with your car fixed in the centre of the screen and the road and scenery scrolling to keep up with the action.



AMIGA - Ooh, me axles! This cross-country lark does no good to the bottom (of your car, I mean).



ATARI ST - Truckin' hell, look out for that lorry, Missus!



AMIGA - The between-races options screen. Change or upgrade your car or let your mate join in the fun. Here the ubiquitous Mr AAA logs on for the next course.

The aim of the game is simple - to be first past the post in over 32 races and win enough points to become the Champion of Champions! The races take place in four varied terrain types: city, woodland, desert and most dangerous of all apocalypse. Before each race you are given the chance to select one of three car types to drive, Formula 1, sports car and turbo buggy, each with various pluses and minuses.

Assuming you've picked up cash during the race you are also allowed to buy upgrades, such as better traction or increased top speed. It's vital that you keep your fuel topped up - run out and you have to restart the Championship! Once you've made all your selections then it's onto the race.

There are four cars in the race. Three humans can compete, two on joysticks and whoever draws the short straw on keyboard. The computer takes the reigns of any spare drivers. The controls couldn't be simpler - right and left rotates the car, pressing fire accelerates it and pushing forward kicks in the turbo boost, provided you've bought one.

Once the green light flashes you're off, screeching round the hairpin bends and jostling with the others for the lead. Colliding with the other cars, traffic cones and debris littering the course slows you down, and oil slicks make you skid, though fortunately they don't leave skid marks (snigger!). Bonuses, such as cash and turbo boosts, are liberally scattered about and driving over them picks them up.

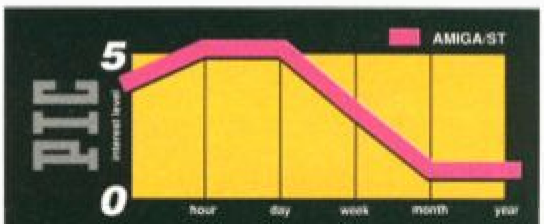
Occasionally the track just ends, so you have to make a desperate drive across country to find where the road continues! An added feature is that every fourth race takes place at night. The scenery is pitch black except for a circle of light thrown by the headlamps of the four cars and the luminous cats' eyes in the road.

At the end of the race you are given points depending on your finishing position. If you end up with the highest score when all the races have been run then you've won the Championship - congratulations! But be warned - it won't be easy. In the single player game the computer controlled cars are very aggressive, although strangely they go to pot in multiplayer games, presumably so that it becomes more of a race between you and your friends rather than the computer.

Unfortunately the multiplayer option isn't as much fun as driving alone - those found slacking and getting left behind by the scrolling are pulled up to join the pack and penalised by the loss of fuel, which is too jarring, and those in the lead have to drive near the edge of the screen, which means they can't see upcoming bends and obstacles.

Psygnosis have got a little cracker on their hands here. The game is easy to get into and incredibly playable. The opposition are no slouches and there are plenty of slick touches that make the game a joy to play. There are some significant differences between the Amiga and ST versions (see the Version boxes), but the fundamental gameplay is the same and both are equally enjoyable. Put the pedal to the metal - now!

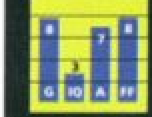
● **David Upchurch**



Very polished presentation leads into a great game. Lots of fun *for a while but it shouldn't take too long to see all the tracks.* However the opposition are pretty tough, so you won't be winning the Championship too quickly. It's a pity that the multiplayer option isn't that brilliant, because this limits the long term appeal. You will pick it up for the odd go now and then, though.

ACE RATING

820

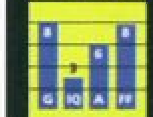


AMIGA

Very tasty. An excellent intro sequence whets your appetite and this is more than satisfied by the game itself. The screen scrolls smoothly in all directions and the background and sprites are well designed. The meaty music and effects fit the game perfectly (although some variety in the tunes would've been appreciated - the one on offer grates after a while). The delay between games is a little frustrating but doesn't spoil what is a polished and entertaining racing romp.

ACE RATING

815



ATARI ST

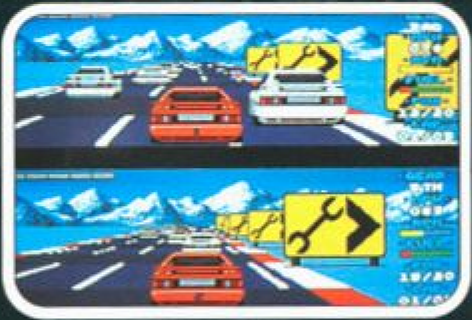
Unfortunately vertically scrolling only, which makes the courses a little easier to negotiate, but this is more than compensated for by the appearance of pedestrians and other non-competing vehicles on the road. Some levels award points for running down those stupid enough to wander onto the road - very Death Race 2000! Just as much fun as the Amiga version, but for slightly different reasons. Mad Max would love it!

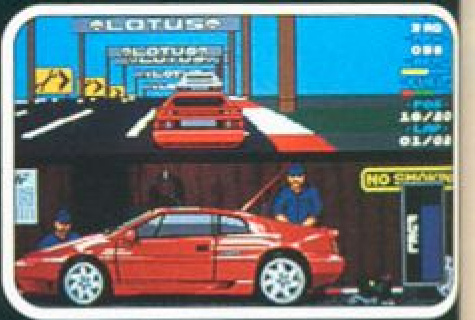
RELEASE DETAILS

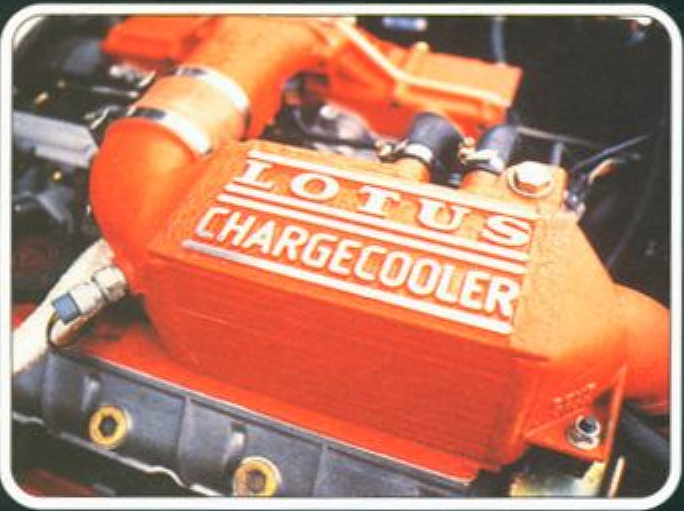
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW

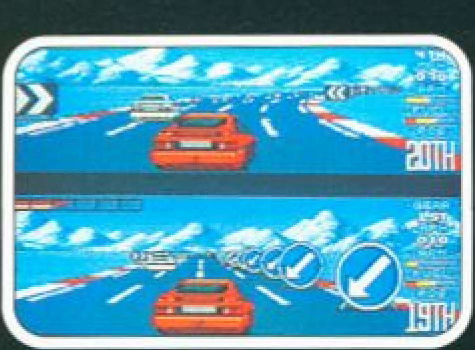
No other versions planned

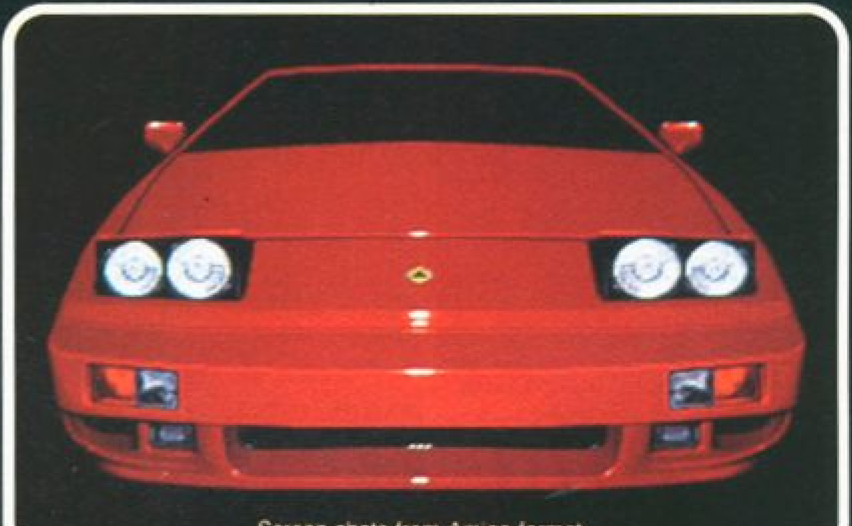
LOTUS ESPRIT
TURBO CHALLENGE



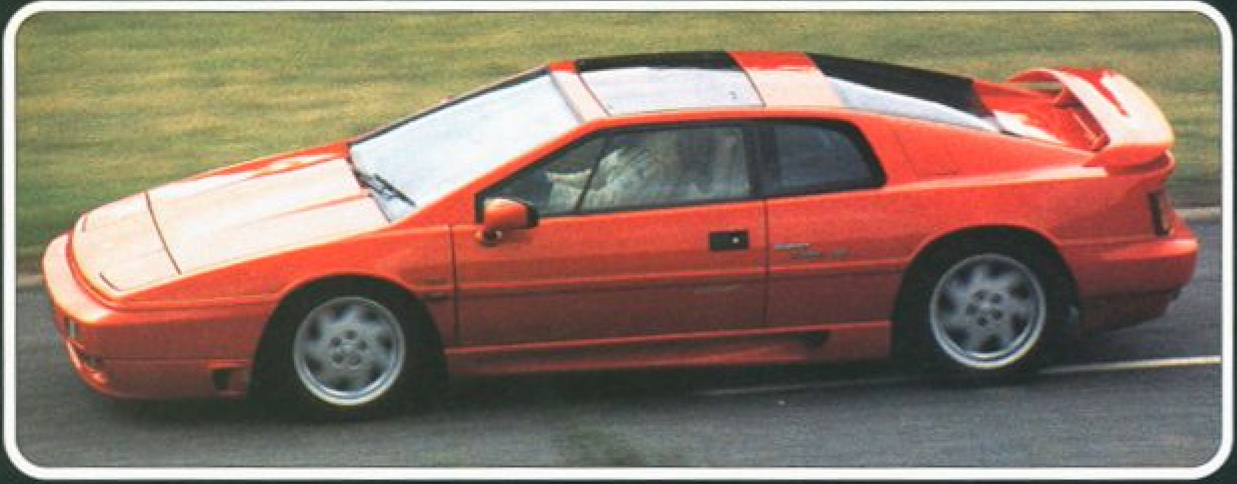

LOTUS
NO SMOKING


LOTUS
CHARGECOOLER





Screen shots from Amiga format.



LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO SE

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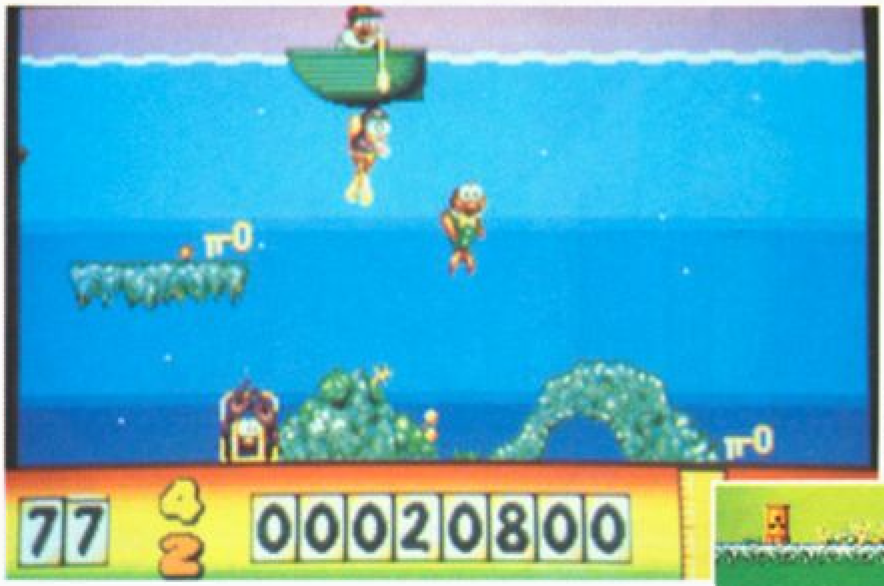
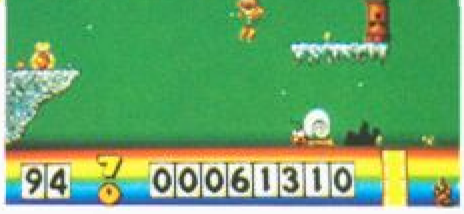
Even for a human it's not easy to do a Sean Connery impression underwater - Cod knows I've tried several times - so for our fishy friends it must be even more tricky. One minnow you're seducing a sexy skate and the next you're facing the evil Blowfish, head of S.H.A.R.K., who's holding the World to ransom to the tuna of one million s-mackerels. Make a mistake and you've haddock, and you end up feeling like a right pilchard!

So you've got to ask yourself this question: Am I fish enough to help James Pond through twelve daring missions of gill-chilling action? Do pay attention, 007, I said... Oh, you heard. Well, sit up and listen then...

BRIEFING: You are James Pond. Guide James around the attractive multiway smooth scrolling aquatic scenery with simple tugs on the joystick. James is no amphibian, but that doesn't stop him jumping out of water and leaping around the above-water platforms when the need arises. He's got to be quick though - every second above water depletes his energy.



ATARI ST - Hmmm, lobsters in trouble. This looks like a job for... James Pond!

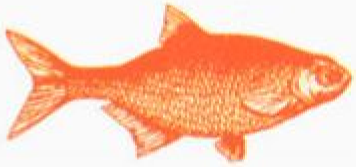


AMIGA - No nukes is good nukes. Find the fish and guide them to safety.

Something fishy's going on! Will you take MILLENIUM's bait?

JAMES POND

UNDERWATER AGENT



Warning! James is not alone. The water is teeming with an imaginative range of nasties, ranging from energy-draining fish to ink-squirting octopi (which briefly turn the screen black if James hits them). Note that James is only budgeted for three hospitalisations should his energy run out. James can defend himself by blowing bubbles and trapping the enemy. Bursting the bubbles turns the snared nasty into a point-packed bonus item to be picked up.

These bonuses, and others already littering the sea bed, usually award points but others enhance James' abilities or deplete his energy. Small tunnels in the rock walls lead to bonus rooms containing oodles of bonus points and items. Some rooms contain letters - make the words 'JAMES POND' for a huge bonus!

However, James is required to do more than just float around, bubbling baddies and bagging bonuses. He will be told before each level about the mission that must be completed before access to the next level is permitted. If James has time he may go over quota on mission minimum requirements and earn bonus points. Haste is vital - if the time limit expires and the mission has not been completed then James will be 'retired' by a energy-draining raincoat-clad assassin.

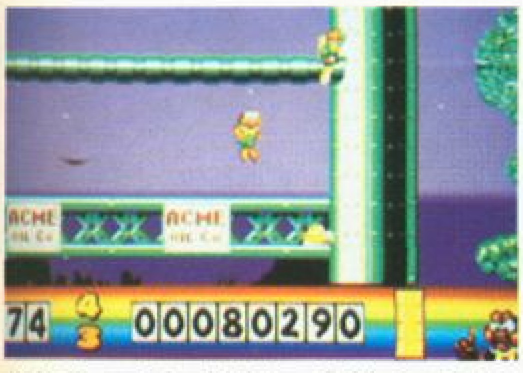
The Green-tinged missions seem varied (e.g. find keys to free caged lobsters, recover treasure from Atlantis, find dynamite to lay at the base of a leaking oil-rig) but boil down to the same thing: take a number of items from one place to another. Since James can only carry one item at a time, there's a lot of (sometimes tedious) tooing and froing.

PROS: Presentation is classy. Sounds and graphics are top-notch. Excellent playability. Send commendations to the lab boys, Q.

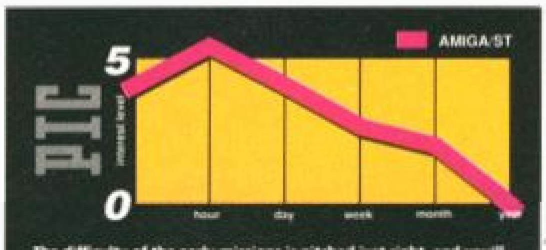
CONS: Each level looks and plays pretty much like the last, therefore there's little urge to see what features and graphics appear later on.

FINAL ANALYSIS: Initially lots of fun, but the repetitive nature of the game is ultimately its downfall.

● **David Upchurch**

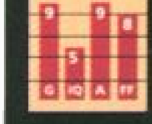


AMIGA - The game's rigged! Help James find the dynamite to blow these dirty drillers to polluter's hell!



The difficulty of the early missions is pitched just right, and you'll soon be swimming like Duncan Goodhew. As the levels get larger and the number of opponents increases you'll find you have a pretty tough game on your fins. The only problem is that, in the long run, the levels are too similar in style, and you may find your interest fading long before you near that final mission.

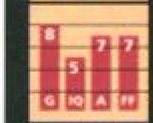
ACE RATING
780



AMIGA

Millenium have really pulled out all the stops on the aesthetics - the parallax scrolling and amusingly cute sprites are complemented by some excellent music (particularly Level One's SKA-style Pond theme), although there's some serious sprite flicker and jerky scrolling on the later, very crowded, levels. Unfortunately the gameplay (collect objects and take them somewhere else) is too samey to be truly satisfying. Fun while it lasts, though.

ACE RATING
765



ATARI ST

Unfortunately this version, although as good as you could hope for from the ST, suffers in comparison to the Amiga: the action is slightly slower, the scrolling is one level and not as smooth and the music a little grating. The gameplay is identical, and shares the Amiga's long term problems.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

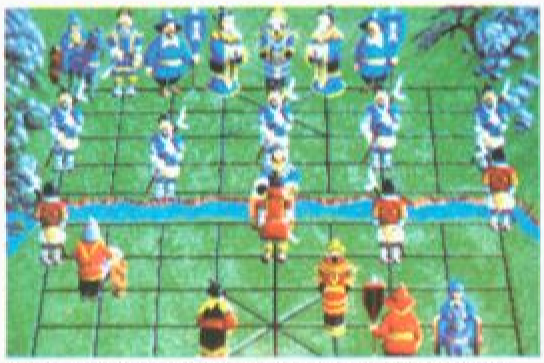
BATTLECHESS II

Electronic Arts broke the mould of board game simulations with Battle Chess – now it's back to wok with Chinese Chess

Certainly the most enjoyable chess simulation on a home computer, Battle Chess brought two much-needed elements to the classic board game - a sense of humour and great graphics. While the combat sequences between the 3-D animated playing pieces tended to get monotonous with familiarity, in the short term at least they pepped up what was in any case a flexible and powerful chess sim.

So why bring out a sequel which is, on the face of it, the same game with different graphics? Battle Chess II - Chinese Chess may look like a thin excuse for a sequel, but with a little study you will soon realise that this is a whole new sort of challenge.

Chinese chess differs from the conventional European version in several ways. Firstly, the layout of the board is different, with a "river" across the middle which marks a change of rules as the pieces move across it. Secondly, the pieces are different, moving according to different rules along connecting lines between squares. Thirdly, there's a "home" section known as the Imperial Palace which features diagonal lines, and which limits the movement of the King.

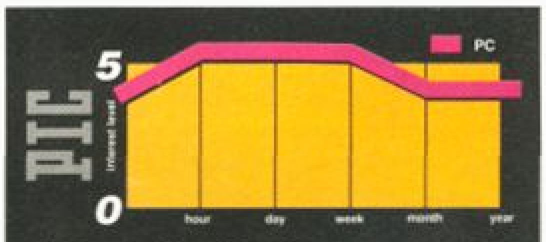


A point-blank situation for a pawn. Fortunately, the cannon-wranglers can only fire over the top of their adjacent enemies.

Initially, though, it all looks fairly conventional. There's a lovely opening screen, followed by the default board display featuring colourful perspective graphics of the beautifully-drawn playing pieces facing each other.

Clicking on the right mouse button brings up a series of menus for Disk Operations (load game, save game, new game, set-up, quit), Playing Levels, from Novice to Level 8, and Settings, including player colours, computer/human player, play-by-modem options and sound settings.

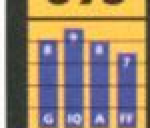
The last menu, Move, allows you to exert more control over the game; you can Force Move, interrupting the computer' s deliberations; Take Back an unwise move, Replay a retracted move, make the computer Suggest Move, Show Layout which superimposes a clear top-down representation of the board, and choose Help Move.



Like European chess, Chinese Chess takes a few minutes to learn but a lifetime to master. If the PIC drops off towards a year, it's only because the admittedly good animations may become repetitive - but you can always play in 2-D

ACE RATING

895



IBM PC

Even with basic graphic and sound modes this game is enjoyable; with more options it gets better. The excellent animation offers more novelty value still, and fast PCs move the game at s cracking rate. The kind of game which becomes more absorbing as you put more effort into it.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£29.99	Nov 90
AMIGA	£24.99	Nov 90
ATARI ST	£24.99	Nov 90

In Help Move mode, when you select a piece to move (placing the flashing cursor beneath it), all the legal squares it can move to will also flash. There are also keyboard alternatives for these options.

A good deal of effort has gone into designing new animations for the combat routines; cannon fire in great puffs of smoke, rooks turn into enormous fire-breathing dragons, roasted pieces collapse in puffs of ash, armour falls to the ground in a crash. It's very entertaining - the first time at least - and not too slow in CGA mode, but in VGA if you're running from floppy disk, constant disk changing for every bit of animation becomes irritating.

Given a hard disk, you'll soon realise that Chinese chess is in fact a much faster and more lethal version of the game. It's very common to win or lose in the first few moves, mainly because the movement of the King is very restricted, while pieces like the Cannon and Rook can move very freely.

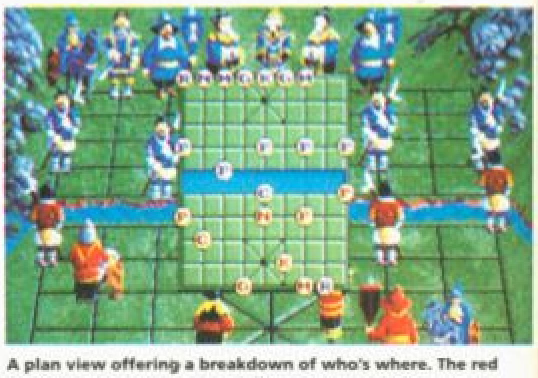
The objective of the game is very much the same as the European version - to checkmate the King, or force your opponent into a stalemate where he has no legal moves.

Most other features are completely different; the Pawns are initially weak, able to move only a single point forward, until they cross the river, when they can also move sideways. They take forwards rather than diagonally. The Cannon can move any number of points vertically or horizontally, but can only take by jumping over a "bridge" piece between it and the target. The Knight can't jump over other pieces, the Minister cannot cross the river, and so on.

Draws through perpetual check are not allowed, and there are other rules which transform the basic approach to the game.

Although the graphics are fine, and the sound effects and music excellent (especially with a Roland sound board) if you already have Battle Chess I wouldn't suggest that you buy Chinese Chess just for the pretty pictures. I would recommend it, though, if you want to challenge yourself to master a novel version of the endlessly fascinating game of chess.

● **Chris Jenkins**



A plan view offering a breakdown of who's where. The red team don't look in an especially strong position.

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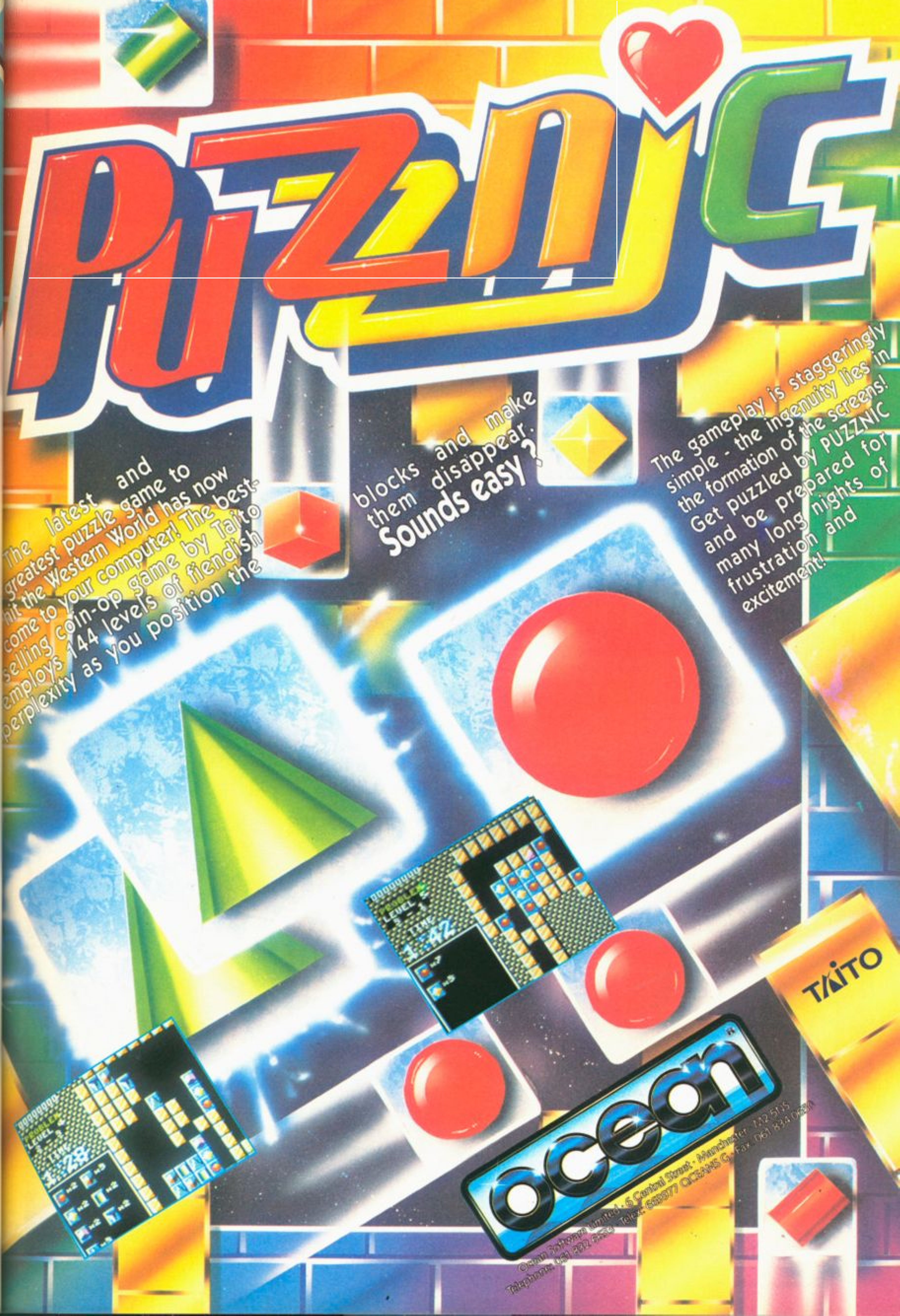

The latest and greatest puzzle game to hit the Western World has now come to your computer! The best-selling coin-op game by Taito employs 144 levels of fiendish perplexity as you position the blocks and make them disappear.

Sounds easy?

The gameplay is staggeringly simple - the ingenuity lies in the formation of the screens! Get puzzled by PUZZNIC and be prepared for many long nights of frustration and excitement!

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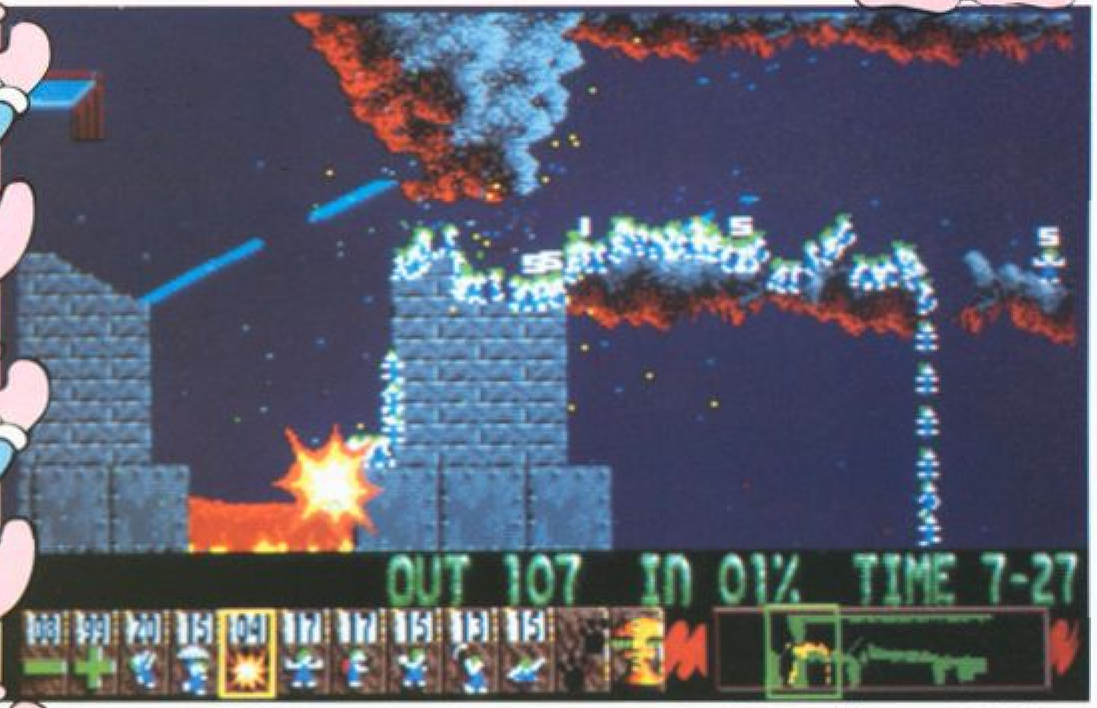


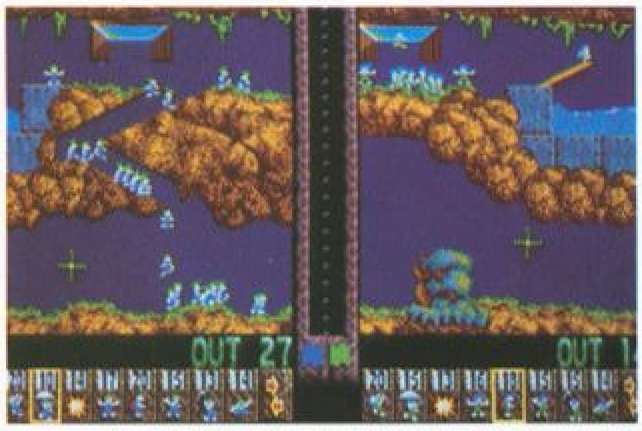
Unless some serious blocking comes into action soon, your percentage loss of lemmings will be too great. Probably best to Nuke'em and restart.

LEMMINGS

Will the onslaught of Psygnosis products ever let up? Evidently not. Jim Douglas takes a look at their two latest.

There's no doubt that *Lemmings* is a significant departure from Psygnosis' usual style. There is no parallax scrolling. There's no depthy storyline. Lemmings is 100% gameplay driven, with a style of user interaction akin to arcade puzzlers like the classic *Boulderdash*.

Rather than controlling a central character, *Lemmings* offers the player the chance to control any of a hundred different controllable rodents, each capable of influencing the



Lemmings in two-player mode. Diagonal digging can save lots of long-drop problems. Blockers at the top of the screen prevent drowning.

ACE PREPLAY

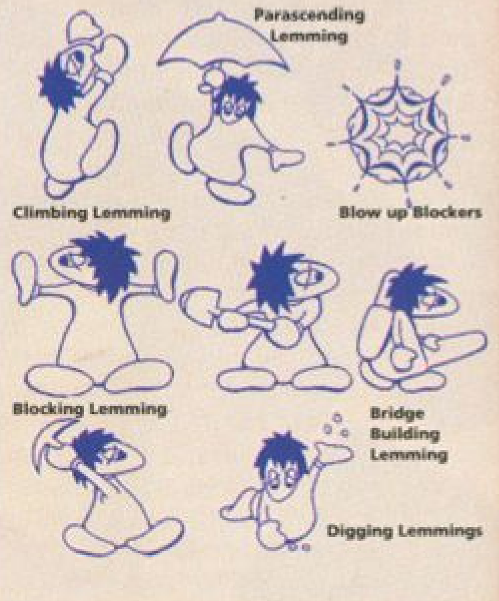
• Excellent gameplay. • High addictiveness. • Cute graphics. • Access codes allowing player to skip through levels once they've been finished.	• Once each screen has been solved, there's not much to left to explore. • Tricky to highlight the correct lemming. Sometimes it's tough to identify which is currently highlighted.

Release Details

AMIGA	£24.99	Nov
ST	£24.99	Nov
PC	£29.99	To follow

The Moves of the Lemmings

Each screen limits the number of "actions" available. You can instruct any lemming to perform any action, apart from Blockers which must be blown up after use.



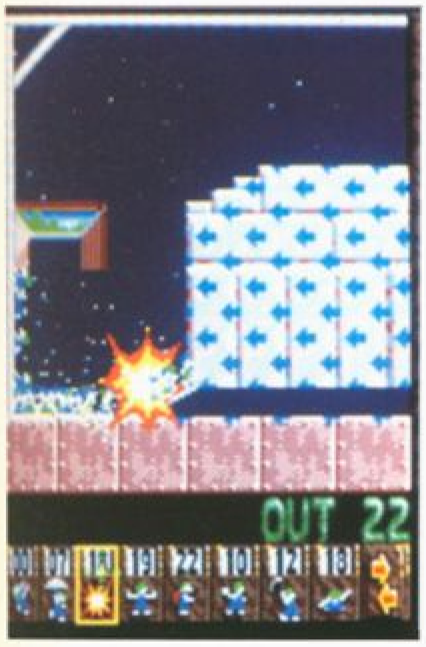
Climbing lemmings **will scale virtually anything. They will automatically walk across and off the edge of the item they've just climbed. As a result you must remember to turn them into...**

Parascending lemmings **which will survive even the longest drop, thanks to their trusty umbrellas.**

Blocking lemmings **will halt oncomers and cause them to about-face. Handy for preventing others from falling into fires, off cliffs etc.**

Bridge Building lemmings **do just that. Each has a nap-sack containing twelve blocks. These guys can build virtually anywhere, but they may end up tumbling off the end of their own bridge if you're not careful.**

Digging lemmings **will dig either vertically down or diagonally left or right. They'll dig until they emerge the other side of the obstacle or they hit something through which they cannot dig.**



The fiendish one-way only tower! Send a climber over the top and instruct him to dig back, making a path for the others.

behaviour of the rest of the group.

The Lemmings find themselves in increasingly more treacherous situations, in ever more hostile landscapes. It's your objective to guide as many as possible from the entrance to the exit of each level.

Simple? Non. Once the trapdoor at the top of each level has opened, the lemmings pour through at a controllable, but unstoppable rate. Once they hit the ground they'll keep running in a direction until something makes them stop.

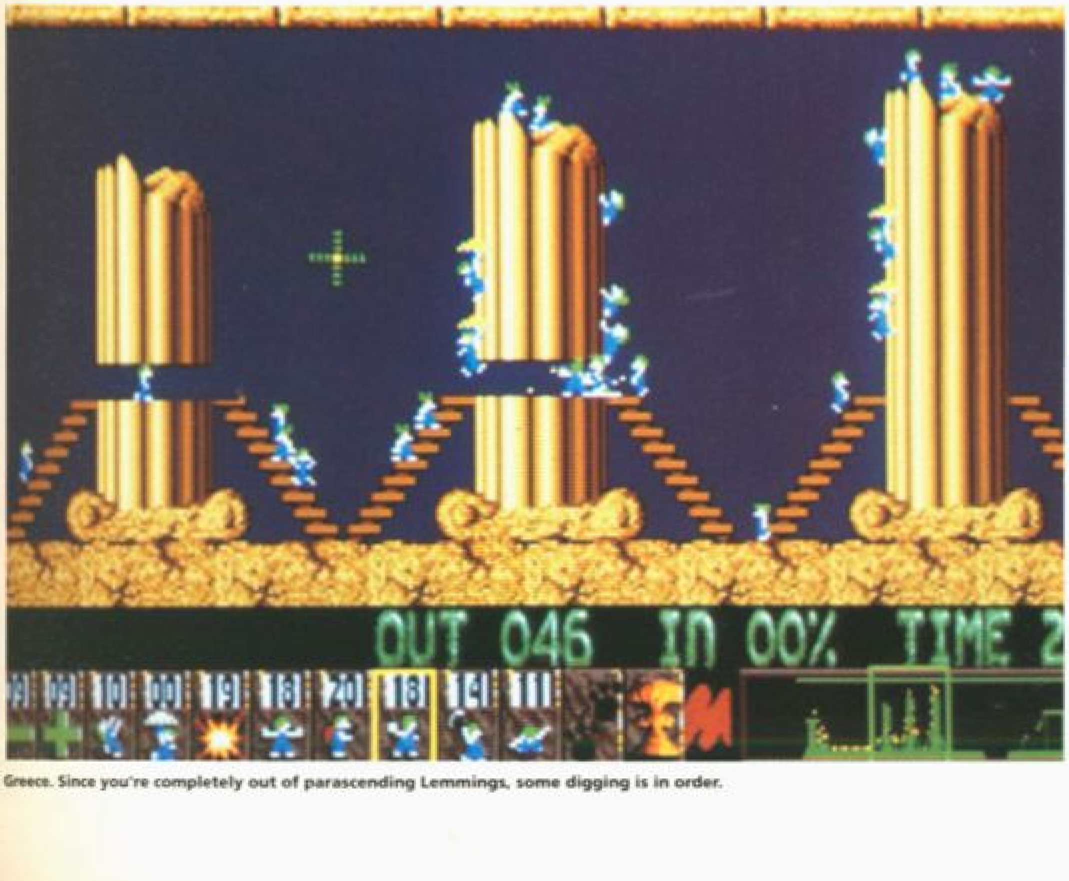
On the first few levels, the obstacles are generally harmless; walls simply make the lemmings turn around. Later, however, there are fatal consequences for not controlling the lemming flow at an early stage.

Being easily influenced creatures, the lemmings can be instructed to perform five basic tasks. These – condition permitting – will be carried out immediately. (See separate panel.)

By clicking the Action icon, your cursor will be charged with that ability and the next lemming you highlight will perform the appropriate action.

A scanner at the bottom of the screen gives an overview of the level and charts each lemming's progress, together with an indication of how many lemmings have been saved/killed.

● Jim Douglas



Greece. Since you're completely out of parascending Lemmings, some digging is in order.

OBITUS

ACE PREPLAY

Ramsave option for 1meg owners to cut down disk access

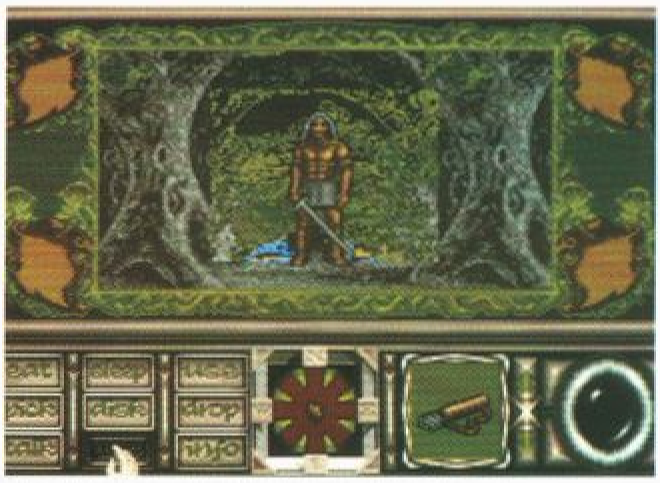
Excellent 3D graphics.

Some elements to entertain everyone.

Disk access between each different stage.

Release Details

AMIGA	£34.99	Nov



Always think carefully before endulging in a woodland scrap. The tree-folk may look a bit weedy (ho ho) but in my experience they're *that* hard.

O*bitus* is a story of magic and mystery and adventures in a world not your own. At least, that's what we're told. In fact, it looks like a three-stage arcade adventure to us.

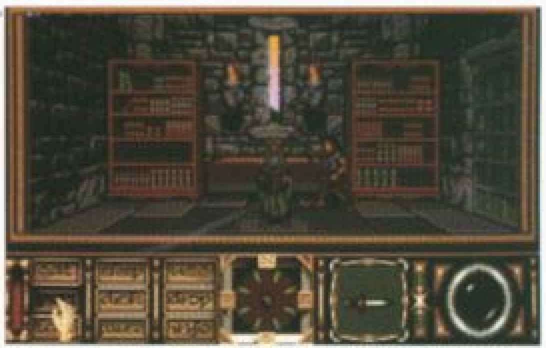
Your journey through this weird and wonderful kingdom is broken down into distinct play styles. There's a first person perspective maze section; as you work through the forests, dungeons and moors of the game, the screen scrolls towards you in not one, not two but three glorious dimensions. These graphics really have to be seen to be believed. The out-of-the-screen scroll is the smoothest I've seen.

Some woodland sections appear to be straightforward sideways scrollers. Indeed, you run along a path, shooting arrows and throwing daggers at the evil beasties lurking in the bushes and trees. Although there are objects to collect and use, these levels to pick up the pace of the game and offer a break from the mazes.

There are four castles in the game, each in a shire of its own. The castles represent the third game style. Here your character can move in three dimensions within a static screen. These castles are beset by traps and offer a good mixture of puzzle solving and action.

While the visual presentation of the game changes frequently, the control method remains constant. A status and command panel in the lower third of the screen offers a compass, an inventory, command breakdown and strengthometer. A disembodied hand floats around this area and operates the command section.

Here you can use, drop, eat and collect objects or command your character to sleep (thus replenishing sapped energy supplies). You can talk to the woodland denizens too. Some offer worthwhile advice, and others offer the chance of a good dust up.



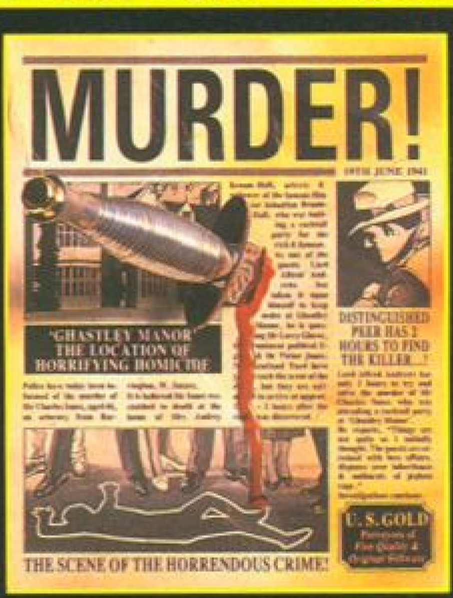
In the castle. Old wise men hand out generous spoonfuls of hokum while you collect potions and tokens.

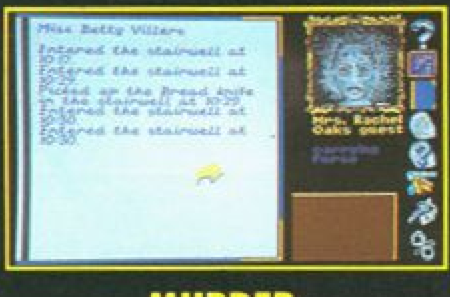
Inevitably, such a sizeable game involves a lot of disk access. Access points fall at the edge of each stage, and you are given an option to continue or remain in the same area. This should save a lot of frustration and forgives the odd direction error.

● Jim Douglas

GOLD IN

The city's alive, an electronic jungle, a million windows dance with ***..m the projected patterns of multi-coloured imagery, the corridors of*** ***so power echo with the sound of digitalised technology as countless..ell***


MURDER!
19TH JUNE 1941
'GHASTLEY MANOR' THE LOCATION OF HORRIFYING HOMICIDE
DISTINGUISHED PEER HAS 2 HOURS TO FIND THE KILLER...!
THE SCENE OF THE HORRENDOUS CRIME!
U.S.GOLD



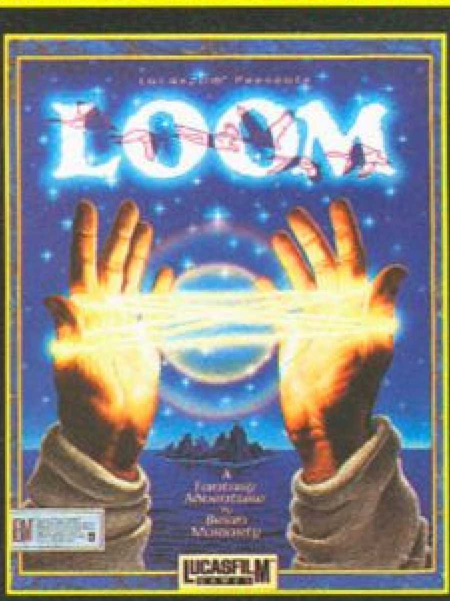
Miss Betty Villers
Entered the stairwell at [illegible]
Entered the stairwell at [illegible]
Picked up the Bread knife in the stairwell at [illegible]
Entered the stairwell at [illegible]
Entered the stairwell at [illegible]

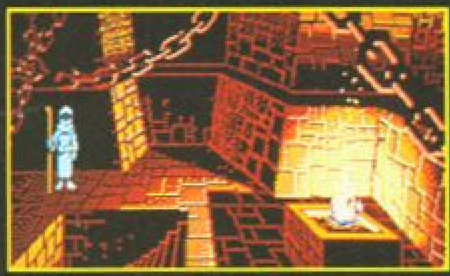
Mrs. Rachel Oaks guest

MURDER

CBM 64/128 Disk, Atari ST, Amiga, PC & Compatibles.

- *3 million murders provide the ultimate challenge, variety and replayability.*
- *A classic race against the clock - you have 2 hours to solve the murder.*
- *Point 'n' click control - providing a totally interactive environment.*

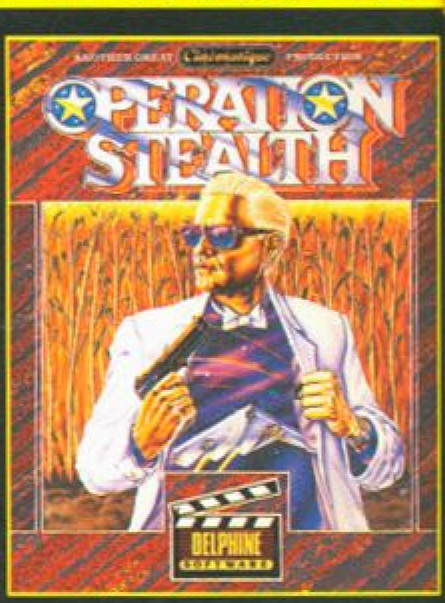

Lucasfilm Presents
LOOM
A Fantasy Adventure by Brian Moriarty
LUCASFILM GAMES

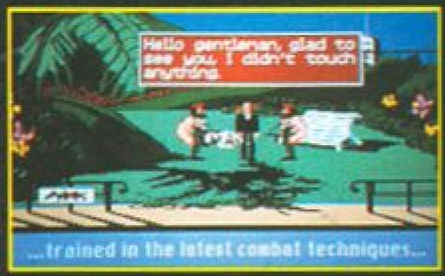


LOOM™

Atari St, Amiga, PC & Compatibles

- *Stunning high resolution, 3D landscapes.*
- *Sophisticated score & musical effects.*
- *Point 'n' click control of characters, objects & magic spells.*


ANOTHER GREAT Cinématique PRODUCTION
OPERATION STEALTH
DELPHINE SOFTWARE



Hello gentlemen, glad to see you. I didn't touch anything.

...trained in the latest combat techniques...

OPERATION STEALTH

Atari ST, Amiga, PC & Compatibles

- *Fully mouse - driven Cinématique™ operating system.*
- *PC version features 256 colours (VGA).*
- *Superb music enhanced by Ad Lib and Roland compatibility (PC version).*

Contact Danielle Woodyatt at US Gold for further information on our extensive range of high quality PC software titles.

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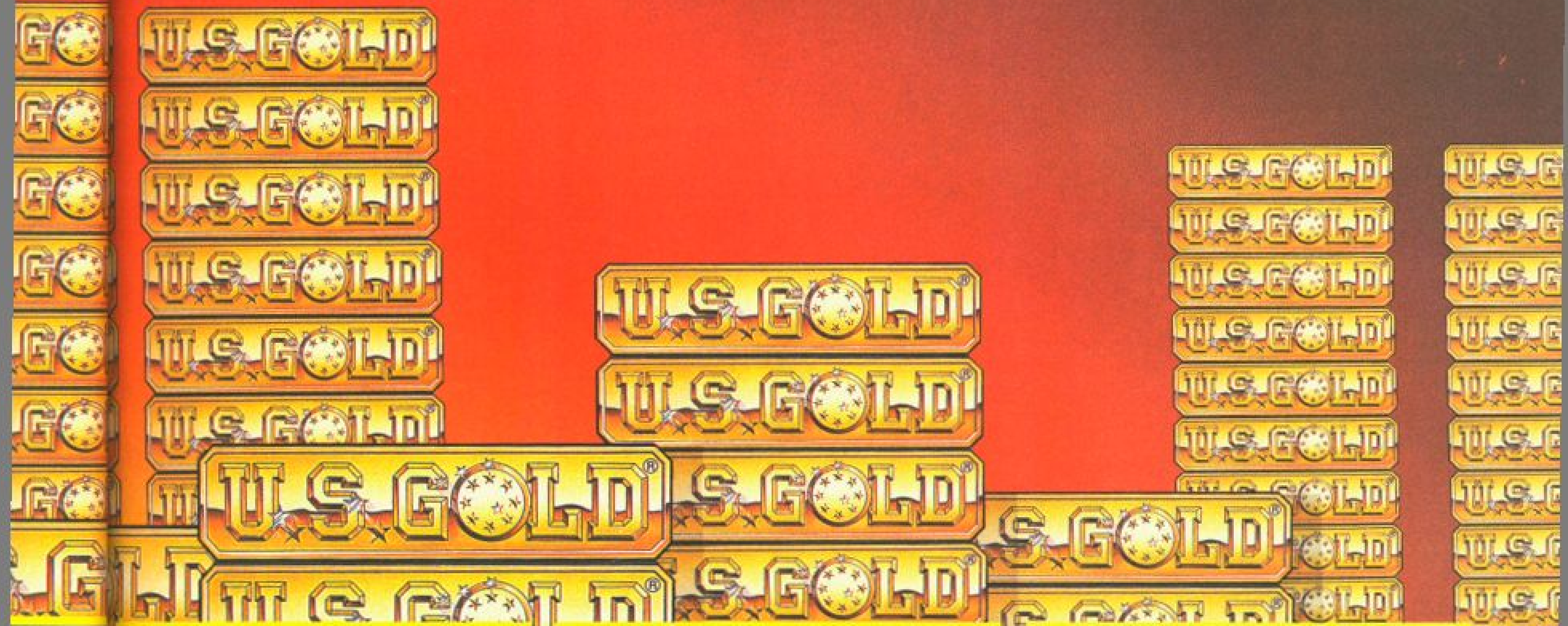
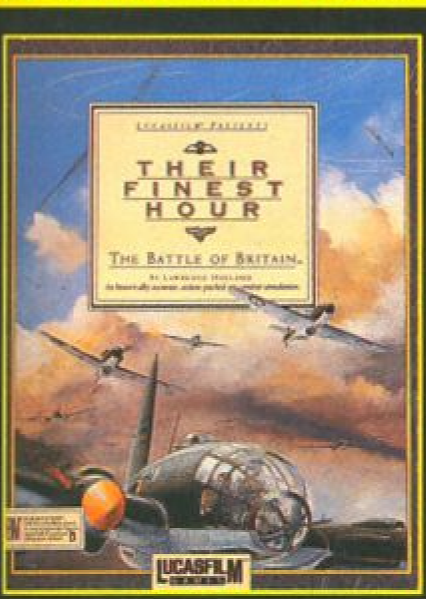
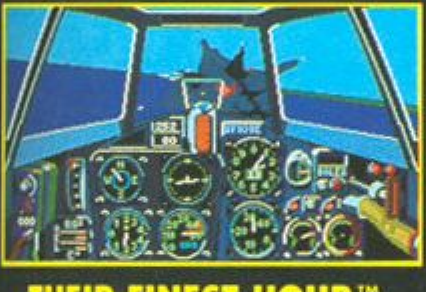
THE CITY

...machines open doors into new worlds of computer entertainment. A solitary figure walks the streets, head bent, dejected. Take pity, tell him about the GOLD IN THE CITY.




LUCASFILM PRESENTS
THEIR FINEST HOUR
THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN
BY LAWRENCE HOLLAND
LUCASFILM GAMES

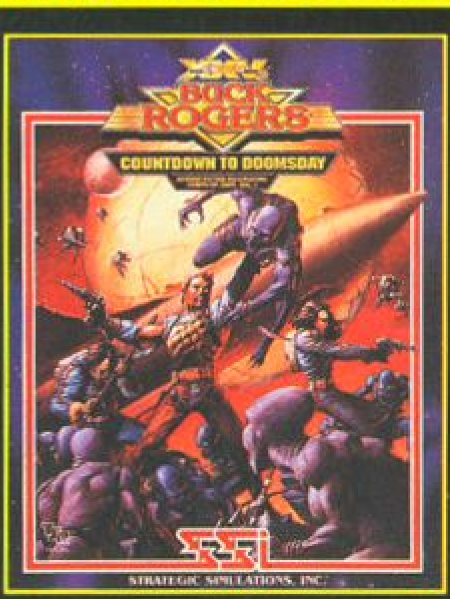


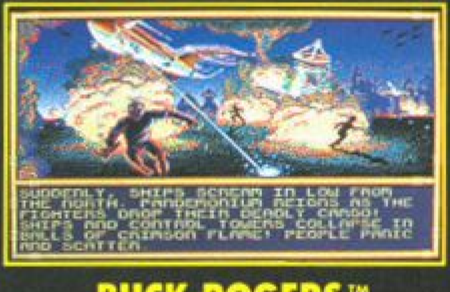
THEIR FINEST HOUR™

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Atari ST, Amiga, PC & Compatibles

- *Create your own mission with authentic combat action.*
- *Comprehensive 200 pages historical catalogue.*
- *Unique reply camera plus a host of special features.*


XXVc
BUCK ROGERS
COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY
SSI
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.



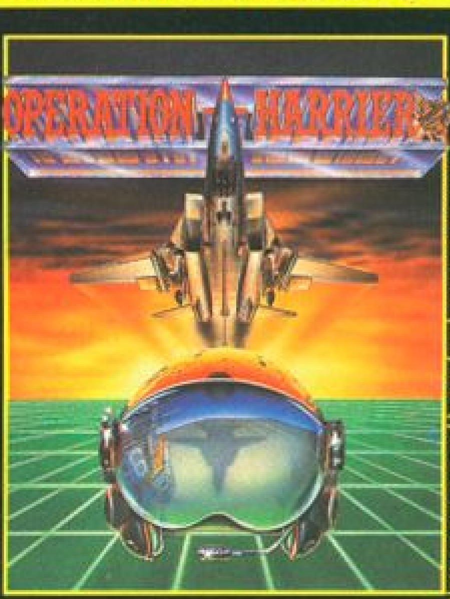
SUDDENLY, SHIPS SCREAM IN LOW FROM THE NORTH. PANDEMONIUM REIGNS AS THE FIGHTERS DROP THEIR DEADLY CARGO! SHIPS AND CONTROL TOWERS COLLAPSE IN BALLS OF CRIMSON FLAME! PEOPLE PANIC AND SCATTER

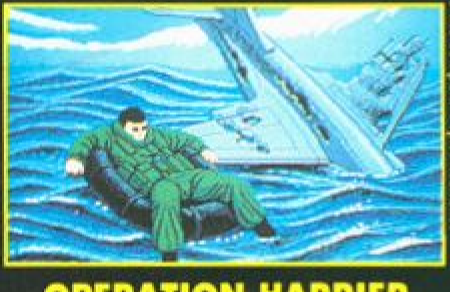
BUCK ROGERS™

COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY

Amiga, PC & Compatibles, C64 disk

- *Detailed computer role playing game.*
- *Battle a myriad of strange beings, including lightening reflexed terrain desert runners, galactic pirates and assault robots.*


OPERATION HARRIER



OPERATION HARRIER

Atari ST, Amiga & PC & Compatibles

- *Features unique ROTOSCAPE rotating-landscape technique.*
- *5 complex missions to tackle and complete.*
- *Ad Lib and Roland sonic support (PC version).*

Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

US Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 625 3366

4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape's contender for the best sports game ever.

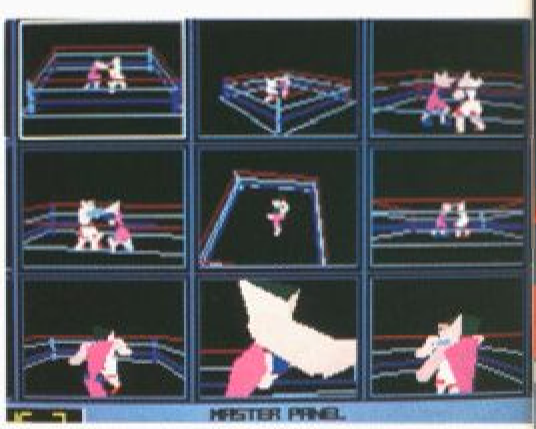
Boxing isn't everyone's cup of tea. Big guys with forearms like hams bludgeoning each other senseless is one thing, but all that antiseptic mouthwash and skipping? No thanks.

Indeed, fight fans have had little evidence with which to convert non-pugilists to the cause. While there's no shortage of decent martial arts games on the market, the transition of the noble art to the small screen has been a little (ahem) rocky.

4D Sports Boxing, however, is a scream. There's the option to get into the action immediately, or take a more sedate approach and construct your own boxer, lead him through the training process and pick and choose your fights, behaving more like a trainer/promoter for much of the game.

Distinct from other ringside affairs, it's entirely polygon run and the mobile cameras provide a clear view of every blow. A video playback option allows your most exciting bouts to be viewed over and over, at literally any speed you want.

Having been introduced by the Master of Ceremonies, both fighters limber up and make for their corners. At the sound of the bell, they bounce/stroll/lumber (depending on weight) toward the centre of the ring and the combat begins.

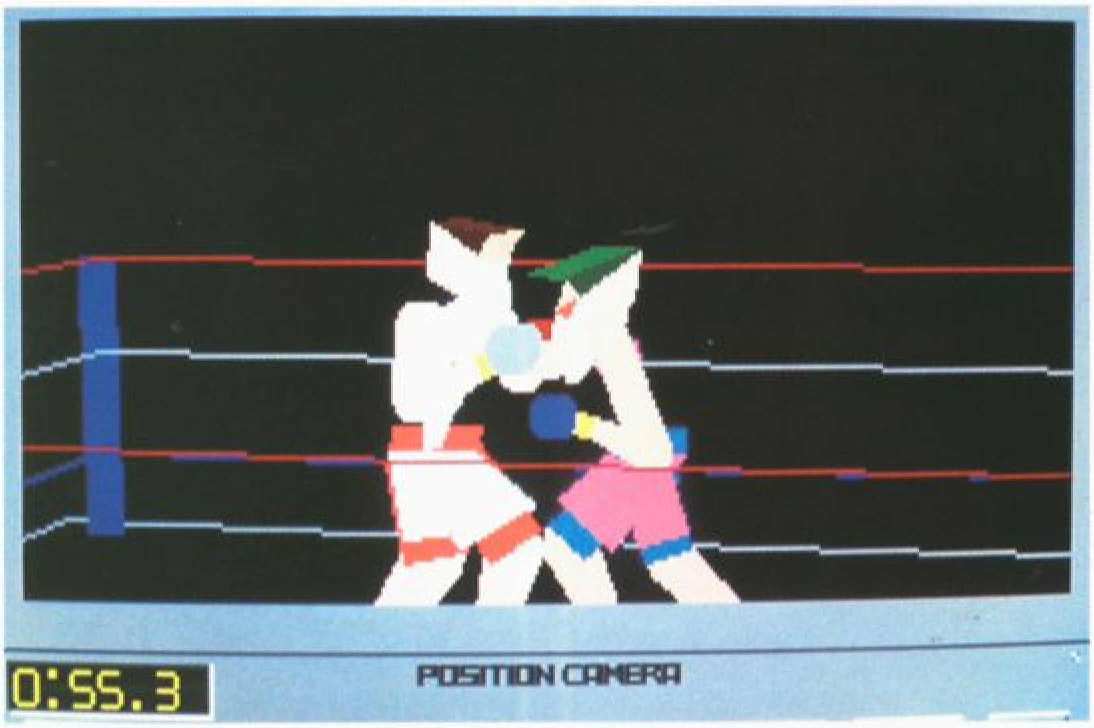


The available moves are truly comprehensive; upper cuts, jabs, hooks, crosses, rabbit punches. You can work inside, push your opponent onto the ropes, even jump on him while he's sprawling on the floor.

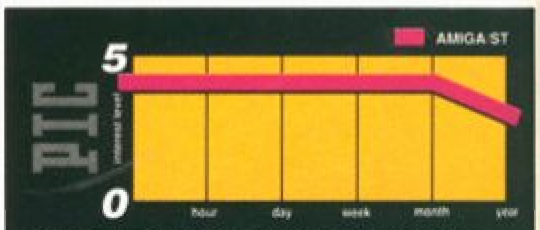
You can fight as many exhibition bouts as you want, and you can pit your fighter against anyone, even the World Champ if you're brave enough. Championship bouts are another matter. You can only fight a boxer within three positions higher or lower than yourself. There are up to three months training time before each bout. In order to succeed against a strong fighter, some work on the heavy bag is necessary. If the opponent is quick on his feet, some serious skipping is in order.

Whether you a fan of the fights or not, *4D Sports Boxing* offers a great deal.

● **Jim Douglas**



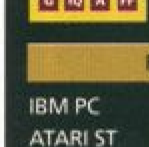
The boxer on the right of the screen is having difficulties. Now is the time to make the most of the upper cut.



A riot from start to finish. Easy to get into, with lots of lasting appeal. The training section offers depth too. And there's some genuine strategy involved in picking the right fights. Even the complexity of the available moves is handled efficiently.

ACE RATING

900



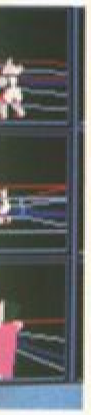
IBM PC

Even on less than supersonic PCs, the polygon routines shift the boxers swiftly. The only problems sometimes occur when the boxers are close together, filling the screen and some of the logic falls down, resulting in objects appearing in the wrong order on the screen.

RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	JAN '91
AMIGA	£24.99	JAN '91

No other versions planned



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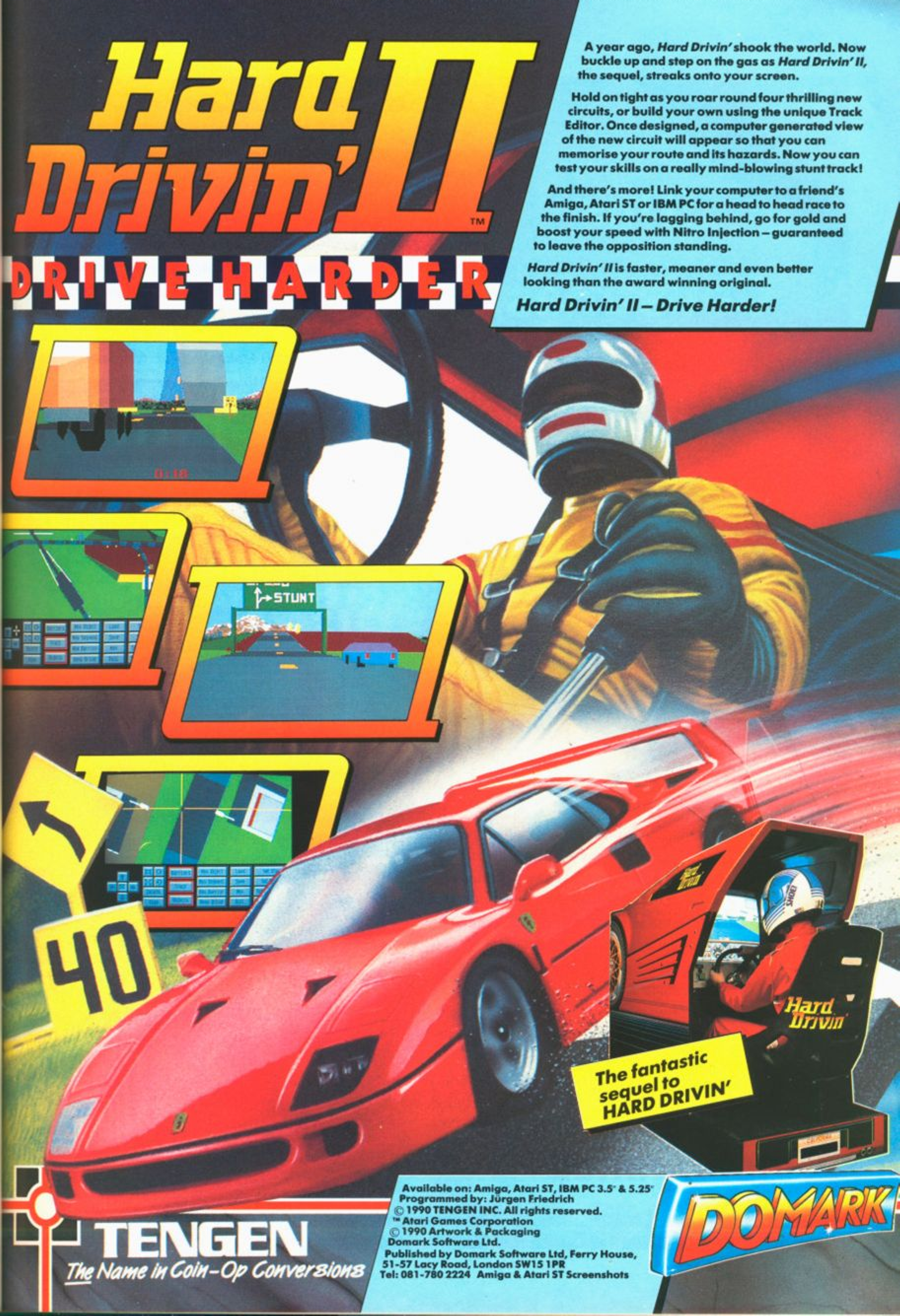
Hard Drivin' II ™
DRIVE HARDER
STUNT
40
Hard Drivin'
The fantastic sequel to HARD DRIVIN'
DOMARK
TENGEN
The Name in Coin-Op Conversions

A year ago, *Hard Drivin'* shook the world. Now buckle up and step on the gas as *Hard Drivin' II*, the sequel, streaks onto your screen.

Hold on tight as you roar round four thrilling new circuits, or build your own using the unique Track Editor. Once designed, a computer generated view of the new circuit will appear so that you can memorise your route and its hazards. Now you can test your skills on a really mind-blowing stunt track!

And there's more! Link your computer to a friend's Amiga, Atari ST or IBM PC for a head to head race to the finish. If you're lagging behind, go for gold and boost your speed with Nitro Injection – guaranteed to leave the opposition standing.

Hard Drivin' II is faster, meaner and even better looking than the award winning original.

Hard Drivin' II – Drive Harder!

Available on: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25"
Programmed by: Jürgen Friedrich
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Domark Software Ltd.
Published by Domark Software Ltd, Ferry House,
51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR
Tel: 081-780 2224 Amiga & Atari ST Screenshots

This Christmas, there's a little bit of Commodore in all of us.

Excitement, adventure, daring, call it what you will. The fact remains there's a little bit of it in all of us. That's why you should give a Commodore computer some serious thought this Christmas.

Take the new Amiga 1500. This powerful home computer gives you the ultimate in family entertainment. Screen images that will literally blow your mind and an impressive collection of leisure software . . . Battle Chess, Populous, Sim City and Their Finest Hour, the incredibly realistic Battle of Britain simulation.

Then, in an instant, it can switch to a serious business machine with Platinum Works, everything you need to work from home. Or to your own design/animation studio with Deluxe Paint III. The Amiga 1500 comes complete with 1 full Megabyte of RAM, keyboard, colour monitor and two built-in disk drives for only £1149.99.

Of course, the Amiga 500, recently awarded European Computer of the Year, is still the most coveted computer for kids of all ages. The Amiga 500 takes you into a fantastic world of graphics, animation and sound. It has the power to educate, entertain, inspire and stretch the imagination like no other.

Commodore
DESIGN
LEISURE
HOME
EDUCATION
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AMIGA 1500

The Commodore Amiga 1500 – £1149.99

"Now, let's see if I can . . ."

This year, look out for our 'Class of the 90's – First Steps' pack with 512Kb of RAM Expansion and a whole range of educational software; Deluxe Paint II, Pro Write 2.5, Infofile, Music Mouse, Let's Spell at Home, Amiga Logo with Talking Turtle and BBC Emulator. 'Class of

class of the 90's
First Steps
Commodore
SCREEN GEMS

The Commodore Amiga 500. Screen Gems – £399.99*
First Steps – £599.99*

"Yes, I'm learning fast . . ."

the 90's' includes 10 free diskettes, mouse mat and introductory video. At just £599.99 it's a small price to help any child throughout their academic life.

And when class is over, there's our new Amiga 500 'Screen Gems' pack which includes Deluxe Paint II and four new challenges, each based on a blockbuster movie; Back to the Future II, Nightbreed, Shadow of the Beast II and the devastating Days of Thunder for only £399.99.

On the subject of fun and games, we present a totally new double pack for the C64, undoubtedly the world's favourite games computer. If brain-stretching tasks are your forte, choose 'Mindbenders' with Confuzion, Split Personalities and Trivial Pursuits. Or if it's pure escapism you prefer, there's 'Night Moves' with the compelling Midnight Resistance, Nightbreed, Secret Agency Sly Spy and Shadow Warriors. The C64 computer comes with data cassette and two joysticks and is outstanding value at £159.99.

The Commodore 64. Mindbenders and Night Moves – £159.99*

Commodore
MINDBENDERS
"I'll give it my best shot..."

This Christmas, we are also proud to unveil the C64 Games System, a system built for one single purpose – having fun.

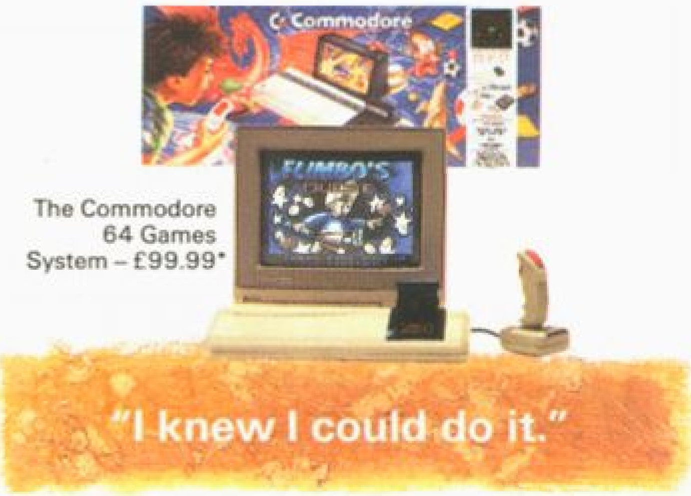
The C64 Games System is instant enjoyment for all the family and comes complete with annihilator joystick and four fun-filled games. When you've mastered Klax, International Soccer, Flimbo's Quest and Fiendish Freddy's Big Top, you can choose from another hundred. All this for under £100.

Every games cartridge for the C64 Games System is compatible with the C64 computer. And all Commodore machines, together with a complete range of peripherals, are available from any major high street store.

So whichever one of our computers you do choose, it's sure to bring out the best in your family. After all, there's a little bit of Commodore in all of us.

Call 071 873 9800 for details or send the freepost coupon below.

The Commodore 64 Games System – £99.99*



All prices are inclusive of VAT.*Monitor not included.

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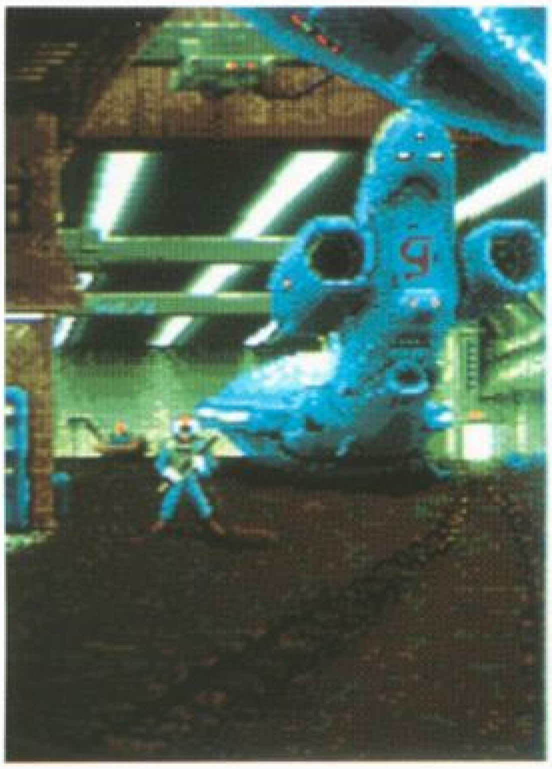
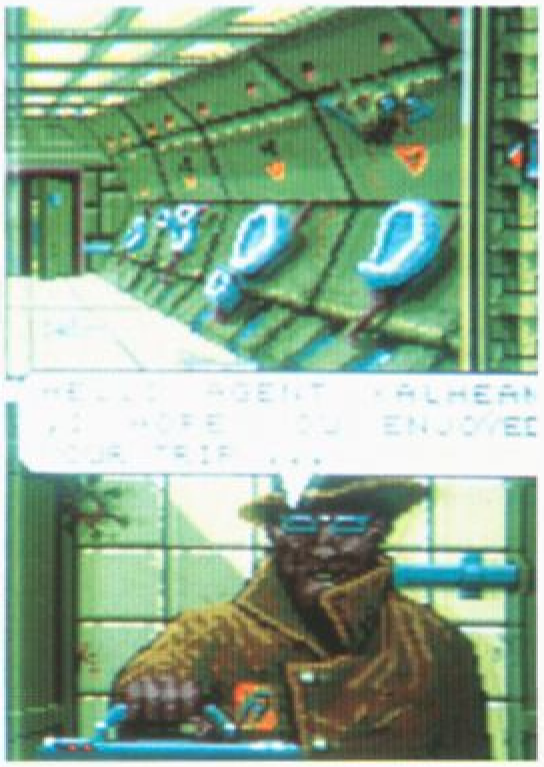


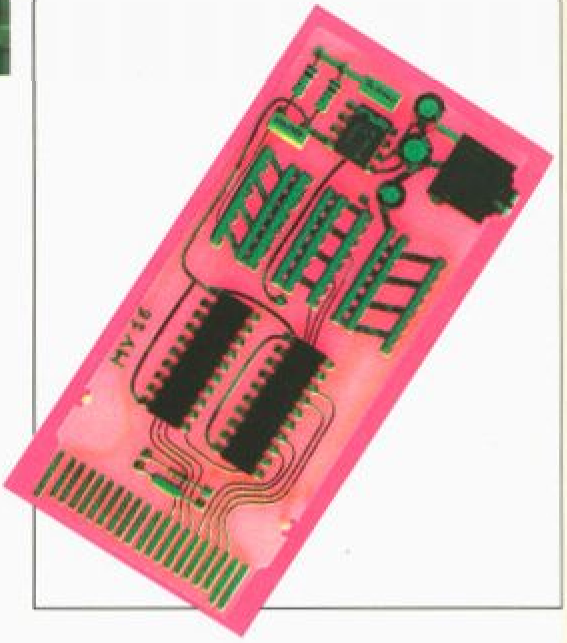


HELLO AGENT KALHEAN I HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR TRIP ...

You can't get any privacy anywhere - there's only a bloody special agent in the toilet cubicle!

SOUND BONUS

Yup, you get a nifty little sound card included with the ST version of the game. The production model of this digital-to-analogue convertor will be packaged in a sturdy card casing, and allows the ST to output four-voice sampled sound effects and music, giving it in effect the sound capabilities of the Amiga. The card plugs into the cartridge port and has a stereo minijack socket which is ideal for use with personal hi-fi headphones - you can connect it to your hi-fi with the appropriate connectors, but the output level is a little low. Sampling resolution is presumably 8-bit, and though there's some background hiss the music enhances the game enormously. On the Amiga version, you get similar sound without the need for a board.



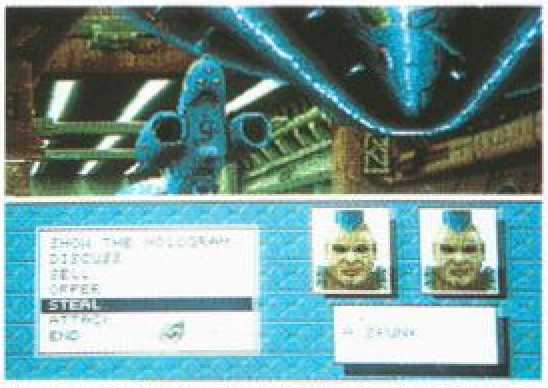
B.A.T.

We've gone batty over BAT – Ubisoft's intergalactic thriller

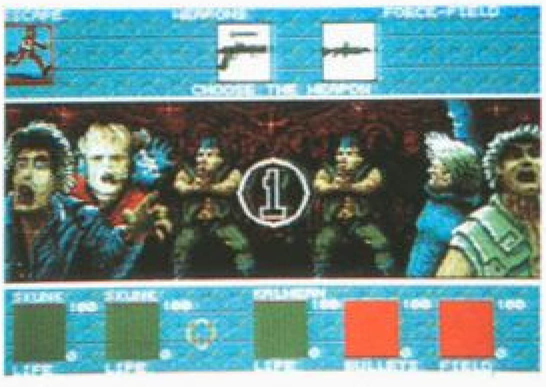
When you open the packaging for *BAT* and a small card-cased PCB falls out, don't panic; it hasn't shaken loose from your ST. It's a freebie which adds even more to the value of this excellent game, but *BAT* would have been a real winner even without this sound card, which considerably enhances the game's soundtrack.

BAT is a massive, superbly designed and absorbing sci-fi graphic adventure which sets new standards in practically all areas. Ubisoft's track record includes as many hits as misses, but in *BAT* the best aspects of graphics, sound and design have come together, heavily influenced I suspect by the French comics geniuses such as Moebius and Druillet.

Set in the 22nd Century, *BAT* is a tale of the Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters, a secret security force whose task is to keep the peace and ensure the prosperity of Earth. Part of the problem is that relations with the planet Selenia, which is dominated by big business, are notoriously tricky. When a criminal genius, Vrangor, blackmails Selenia's businesses with the threat of chemical weapons, you are assigned to track him down and take him out...



Let's have a chat to these fine fellows and see what happens...



Oh no, they think that you spilt their pints. Quick, chose a weapon and get them before they get you!

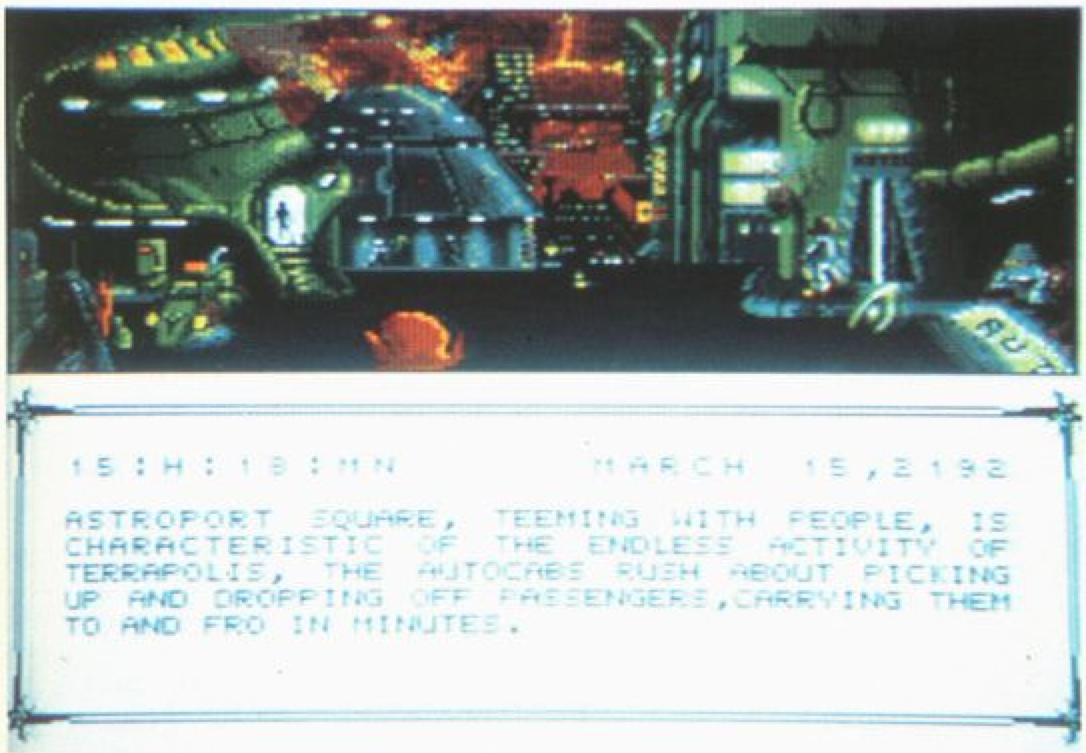
Your only clue is that the brainwave of one of Vrangor's accomplices has been detected; tracking him down is obviously your first task.

PLEASURE ZONE

BAT is a graphic adventure with animated features; it comes on three disks and is completely open in the sense that you can move freely from one location to another in your search for clues.

The backgrounds are gorgeously detailed; locations include space ports, sleazy alleys, pleasure zones, forests, tunnels and even underwater sections. As you move from one location to another, windows open on the main display, and as you move back they close again. There are supposedly over 1000 locations, and each features little animated touches like ambling aliens, flying spyprobes, opening doors and passing shuttlecraft.

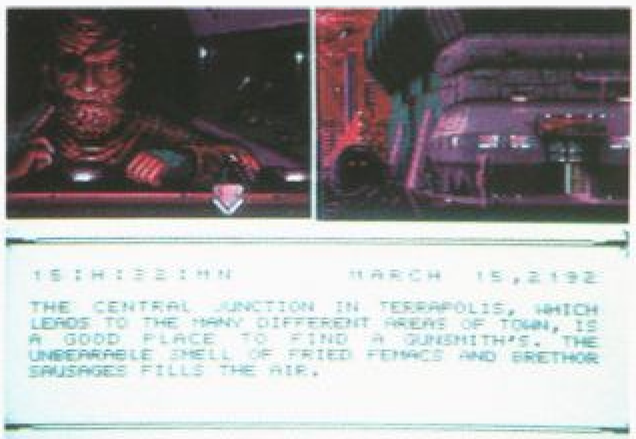
The game itself is pointer-controlled; as you move the cursor around the screen, it changes shape according to the functions available. For instance, the "speech" cursor indicates that you can talk to an alien, the "arrow" cursor that you have found an exit, and there are others or com*bat* and so on. Other functions such as Inventory,



15:H:18:MN MARCH 15,2192

ASTROPORT SQUARE, TEEMING WITH PEOPLE, IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ENDLESS ACTIVITY OF TERRAPOLIS, THE AUTOCABS RUSH ABOUT PICKING UP AND DROPPING OFF PASSENGERS,CARRYING THEM TO AND FRO IN MINUTES.

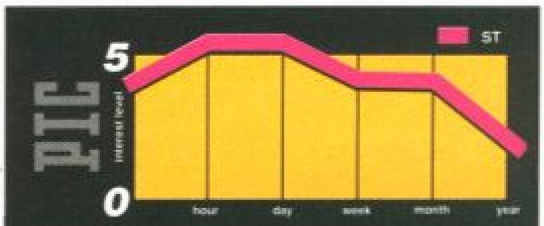
Not far from the astroport lies this teeming square. Where to now?



15:H:22:MN MARCH 15,2192

THE CENTRAL JUNCTION IN TERRAPOLIS, WHICH LEADS TO THE MANY DIFFERENT AREAS OF TOWN, IS A GOOD PLACE TO FIND A GUNSMITH'S. THE UNBEARABLE SMELL OF FRIED FEMACS AND BRETHOR SAUSAGES FILLS THE AIR.

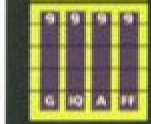
Terrapolis Central - key to the city!



Every aspect of *BAT* draws you in deeper; the excellent graphics, absorbing gameplay, novel sound system and complex plot. With what seems to be an enormous challenge ahead of you, *BAT* may turn out to be not so much a game, more a way of life.

ACE RATING

908



ATARI ST

Although *BAT* takes the ST's graphics capabilities to their limit, the concept of providing extra hardware to enhance the sound output takes it to a new level of achievement. Fast in operation, with a minimum of disk-swapping, it's hard to imagine anything more sophisticated.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£34.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£34.99	IMMINENT
IBM PC	£TBA	TBA
C64 disk/cart	£TBA	TBA

No other versions planned

Health and so on are accessed from a pull-down menu on the top left of the screen.

To give you an idea of the gameplay without giving away too much of the plot, in the opening routine you have to meet your special agent contact (in the gents' lavatory – typiquement Francais, n'est-ce pas?). Moving into the restroom, you pull down the Search option to discover any useful objects, then move into a cubicle where you meet your contact. He gives you a briefing and several useful objects such as a credit card, guns, money and a hologram of your target, Vrangor.

Move out again and try interacting with the seven types of passing aliens. You can ask the time - useful since you're working on a time limit - just say hello and see what happens, or pull up a dialogue window to engage in more complex transactions like bribery. Slip a cop a few galactic credits and he might come up with some useful info - or he might just pocket the cash and tell you to keep your nose clean. Other denizens of Selenia such as the Skunks will sell you ammunition or narcotics.

As the game progresses you can interact in more unusual ways - especially in the alien red light district, which has a lot of exotic experiences on offer. Beware, though, of killer robots who seem to pop up to hurry you along – usually onto a combat screen where your health and ammunition status fall rapidly as you shoot it out.

Around the city you will find video communicators - slot in your credit card, punch the number you want to call, and you can interrogate characters from afar, which saves time. First, though, you have to find their numbers...

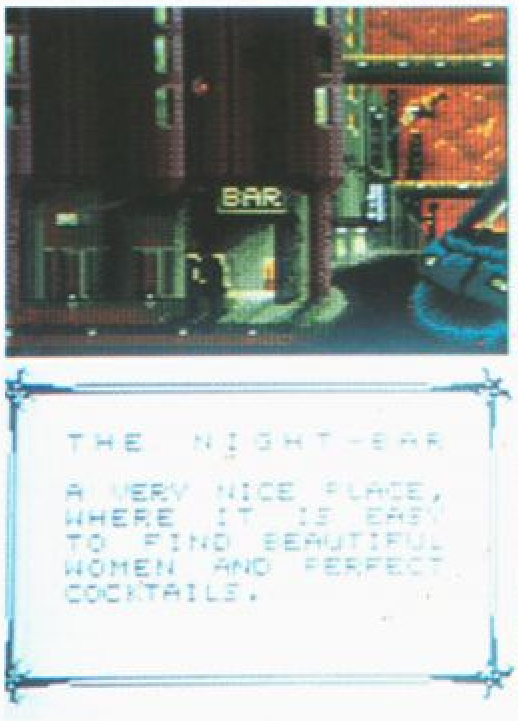
BAT MAN GOES BOBBING

Another unusual feature of the game is your personal computer, BOB, which is attached to your wrist. Click on the right button to access BOB, then select a control key to choose one of the Bidirectional Organic Bioputer's functions. One of BOB's most useful functions is translating Robot and Alien speech for you, but he will also monitor your health and alert you when danger threatens. In fact BOB is programmable – a computer within a computer – so mastering his functions is an essential of playing the game, adding another element of variety. And, oh yes, there's even a limited 3D flight sim sequence hidden somewhere in the game!

The sound effects (see SOUND BONUS panel) of alien speech, gunfire and passing vehicles are excellent, as is the continuous game music which is very atmospheric – but eventually you'll probably want to exercise the option to switch it off. While the sound card has obviously added to the price of the package, you will be able to buy future compatible Ubisoft (and other software houses'?) products without the card, so it's a long-term investment.

Overall *BAT* is extraordinarily good, and if it were possible to award it ten out of ten in every category I would be sorely tempted. As it is, you just have to take my word that if you miss *BAT*, you're missing an absolute classic.

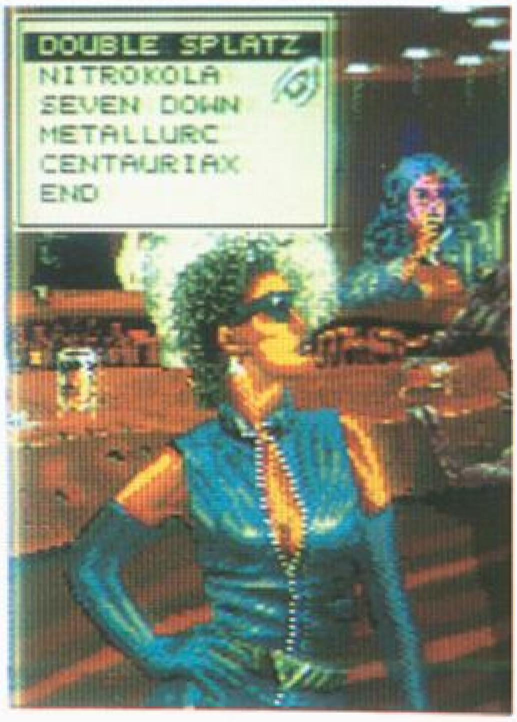
● **Chris Jenkins**



THE NIGHT-BAR

A VERY NICE PLACE, WHERE IT IS EASY TO FIND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN AND PERFECT COCKTAILS.

Sigh! The loneliness of space. You enter a bar searching for solace in the arms of a beautiful woman...



BETRAYAL

Your Father's been murdered,
Your Peasants are in revolt
and your wife's run off with your best friend - the Kings' brother.

Quite possibly the best news you've had for some time!

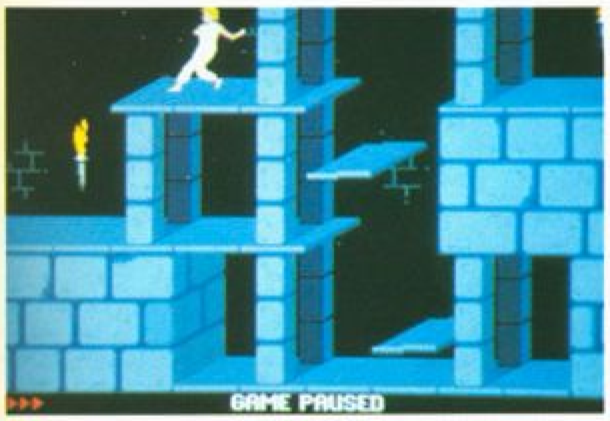
Betrayal.
From Rainbird.
A web of intricate possibilities - but fair play isn't one of them.

RAINBIRD

MASTERS OF STRATEGY

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund's *Prince of Persia* is both a masterpiece of animation and a gamesplayers delight. For UK licensee Domark, Christmas has come early.



Screens mix different levels and traps – they're not as easy as they look

Okay, so there's a well animated guy in a white suit. Big deal. The software bins of ACE are full of games with cute lead characters. What makes *Prince of Persia* so special? Well for a start, the excellent animation is integral to the game. The precision movement of the character allows truly realistic acrobatics to be performed. He can run, jump, climb, fight and duck. He can even creep along, treading carefully through deadly spikes.

The environment the Prince finds himself in is unrepentantly hostile. His mission is simple; to rescue a beautiful princess from the dastardly clutched of The Grand Vizier. While the premise is simple, the adventure ahead is simply breathtaking.

Level One: The Prince finds himself in the dungeons of The Vizier's palace. This stage is very much a training ground. Most of the elements seen later in the game can be found here, in slightly tamer form. Platforms can be reached by standing directly underneath them and tapping "up". Conversely, you can climb down by standing on a ledge and tugging back on the stick. Rather useless dungeon guards swan about, largely for you to practise your swordplay. The colour of these guys' outfits indicates their fighting ability.

Having got to grips with the controls, life instantly becomes tougher. On level two the jumps are longer, the foes are meaner and there's some serious puzzle solving to be done. This stage is your last chance to master the immense control you wield over the movements of the Prince. From here on, there's little room for error.

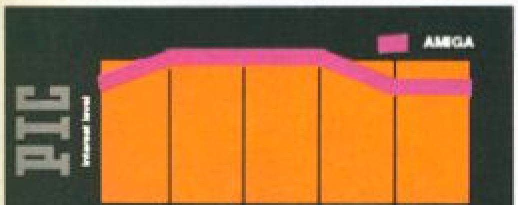
Come stage three, and it hardly feels like the same game. The Prince has to perform superhuman feats with exhausting regularity. If he's not stepping through ferocious razor-edged slicers or battling re-animated skeletons, he'll be performing one of the set-piece tasks. These basically run along the lines of finding a switch, activating it and then returning to the location of the initial obstacle before the switching effect has worn off.

Level 3's particular set-piece runs as follows: In order to reach the door-opening switch, a massive chasm must be crossed. On the other side of the chasm is a closed drawbridge. Below the drawbridge is a long drop and a pit of spikes. The switch to operate the draw bridge is three screens away on the right; on a pillar in the middle of nowhere. The prince must run hell for leather and make one, two, three jumps and hit the switch. The draw-bridge (three screens away) will open. Now comes the tricky part. Once you step off the switch, the bridge will start to close. The Prince must run back across the deadly jumps, sprint across a clear screen building up speed and then perform an incredible leap towards the drawbridge ledge. By the time he makes his jump, the drawbridge is three-quarters closed. If you time it right, the Prince will just crawl through in time. Of course, simply working out what you have to to is a challenge in itself, let alone performing the string of feats necessary to get through.

Throughout the game, helpful sound effects give clues. Touching a secret switch may produce the sound of a far-off drawbridge opening or closing, or even stop the infernal gnashing of those razor cutters. Sensible players will pay close attention to these details.

When static, *Prince of Persia* looks a bit on the dull side. Don't be deceived. When it's moving, it's a dream. You've certainly heard games described as "like a movie" and "cartoon-like animation", but for once it's as true as it's ever likely to be with the current level of technology. And the playability, difficulty and puzzle solving elements are balanced to perfection. A gem.

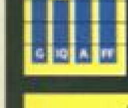
● **Jim Douglas**



The Prince, without doubt offers a pretty high instant "wow" factor. And from there the graphic definition and puzzles deliver excellent maintained interest long into the curve. Even once all levels have been completed, the difficulty and visual appeal of some of the stunts will keep you coming back for more. Skillsville!

ACE RATING

915



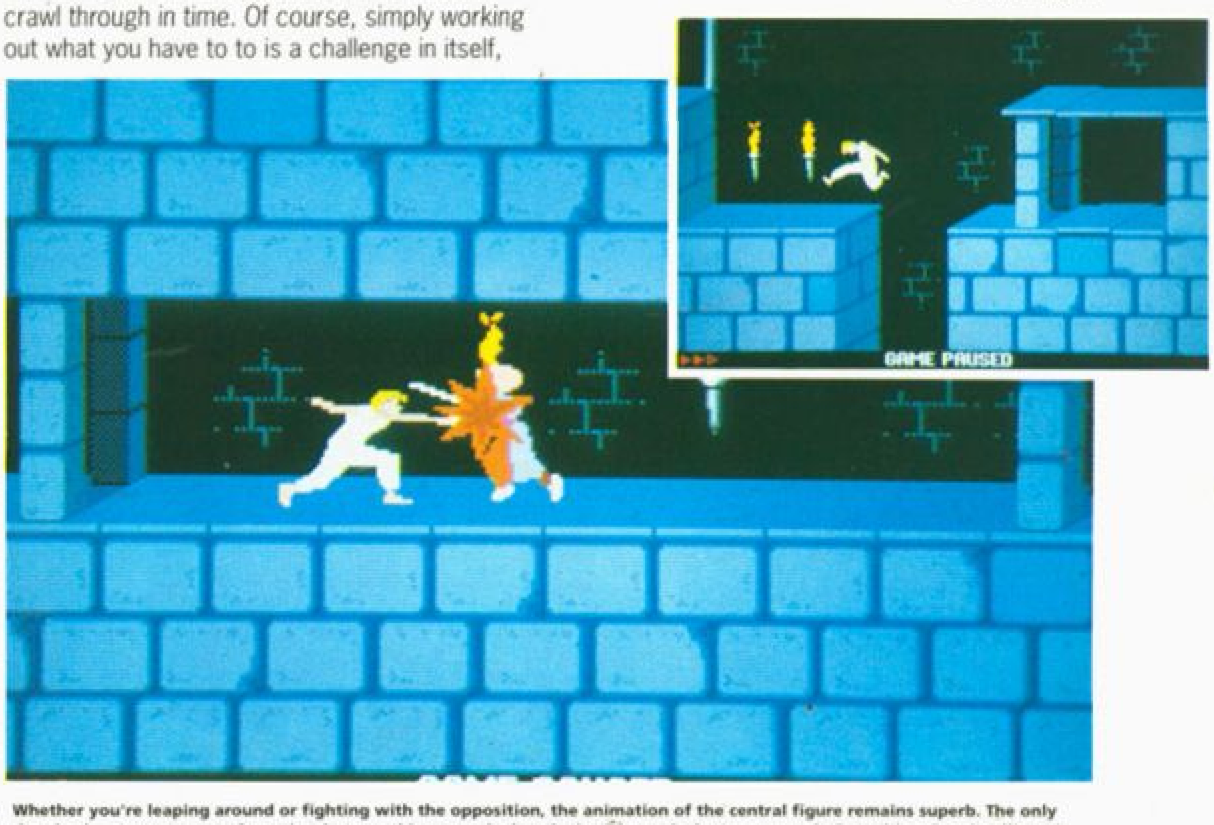
AMIGA

The background graphics of the locations are functional but a little dull. However, with so many secret switches and panels to look out for, it would be a nightmare were they any more complex. The animation of the Prince and his foes is astounding. Arabian-style music at the front end and in between stages adds atmosphere. Excellent and identifiable sound effects add to the game too.

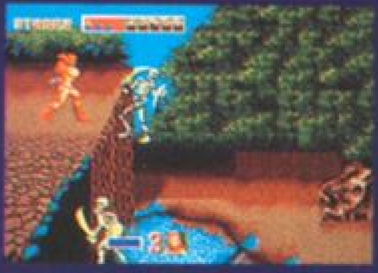
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT

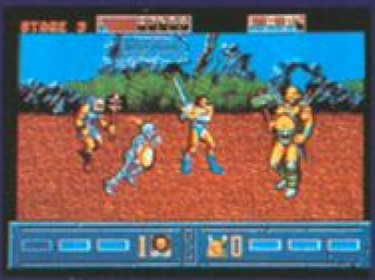
No other versions planned



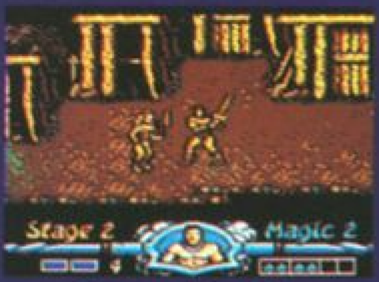
Whether you're leaping around or fighting with the opposition, the animation of the central figure remains superb. The only drawback – as you can see from the shots on this page – is that the backgrounds don't vary much. But with animation like this, you never feel cheated



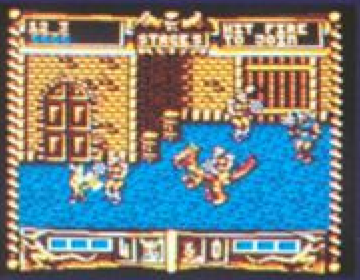
Amiga



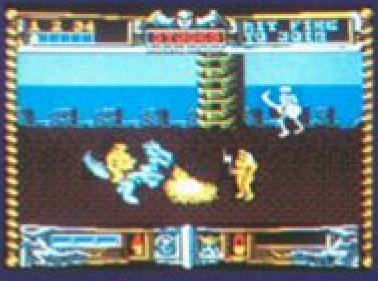
Atari ST


Stage 2
Magic 2

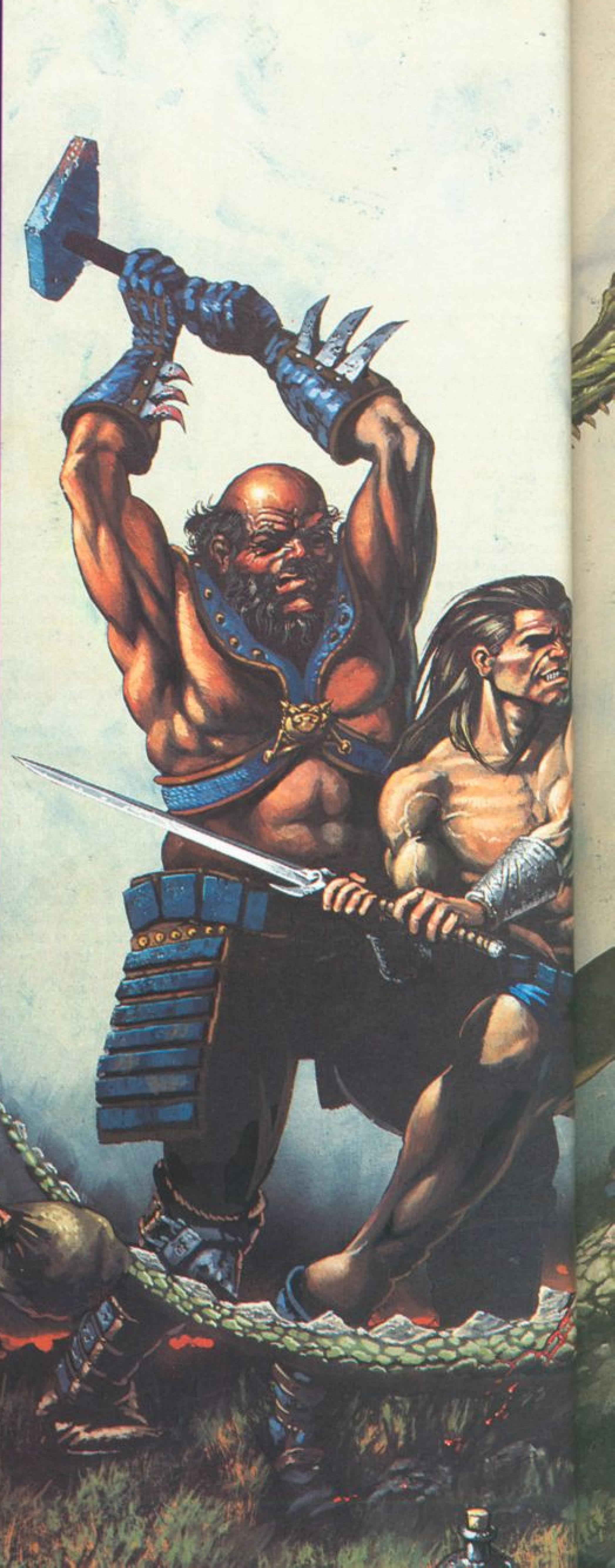
Commodore 64

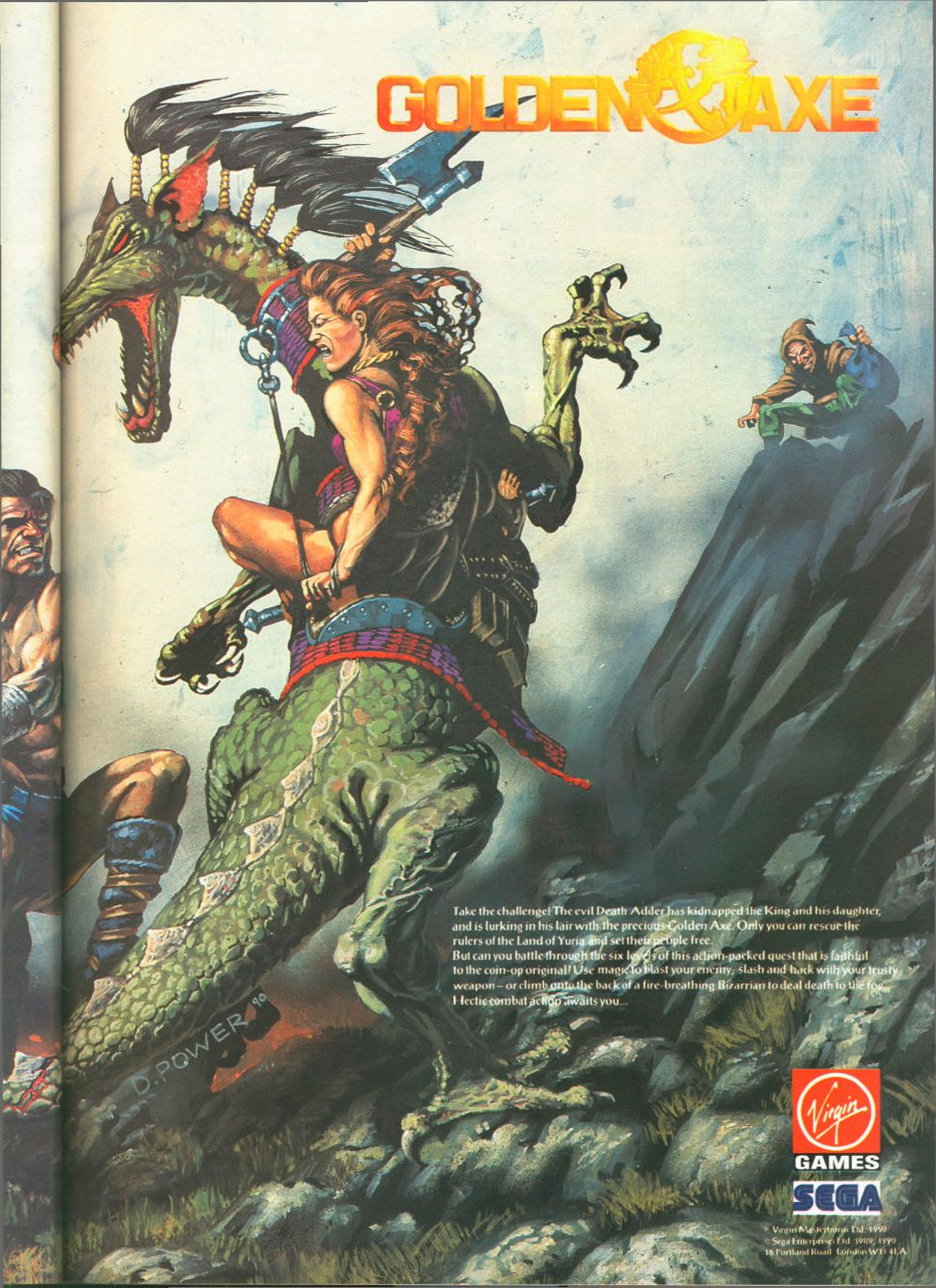

HIT FIRE TO JOIN

Amstrad CPC


HIT FIRE TO JOIN

Spectrum





GOLDEN AXE

Take the challenge! The evil Death Adder has kidnapped the King and his daughter, and is lurking in his lair with the precious Golden Axe. Only you can rescue the rulers of the Land of Yuria and set their people free.

But can you battle through the six levels of this action-packed quest that is faithful to the coin-op original? Use magic to blast your enemy, slash and hack with your trusty weapon – or climb onto the back of a fire-breathing Bizarrian to deal death to the foe. Hectic combat action awaits you...

Virgin GAMES

SEGA

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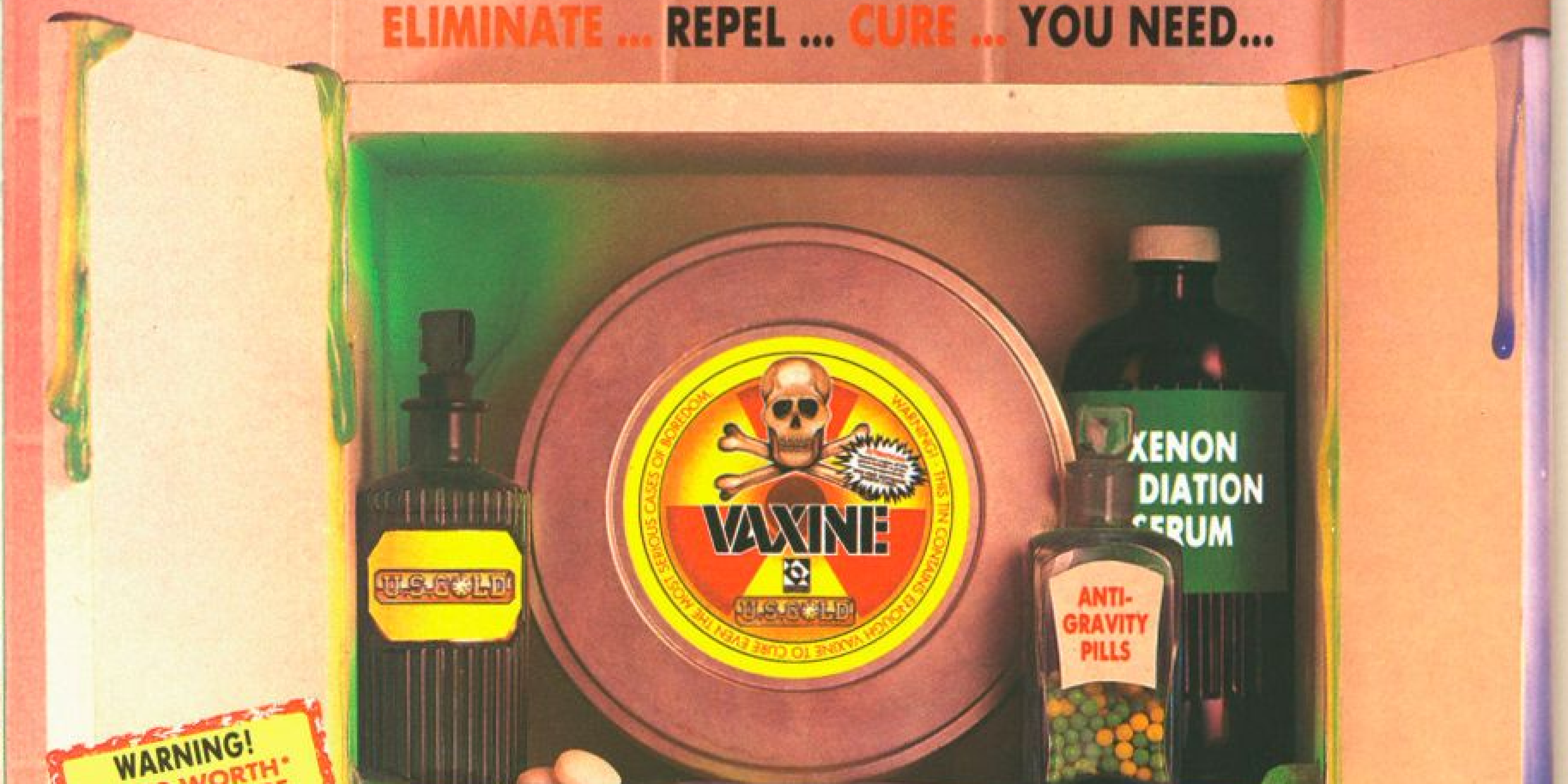
16 Portland Road London W11 4LA

DARE YOU TAKE YOURS ?

**VIRUS ... ATTACK ... HUMAN ... ALIEN ... INVASION ... POISON ... MUTANT ...
CLONE ... REPRODUCE ... SURVIVAL? ... ANTIBODIES ... DEFENCE ...
ELIMINATE ... REPEL ... CURE ... YOU NEED...**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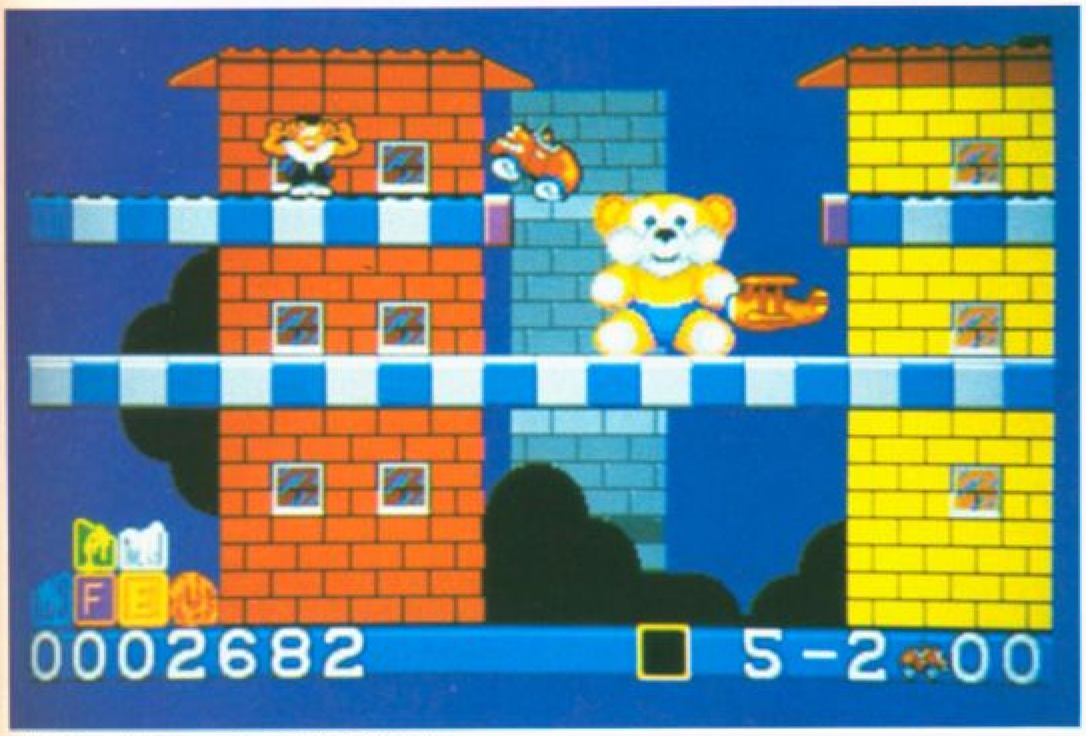


It'll be 'plane sailing once you've got rid of Mr Naa-Naa.

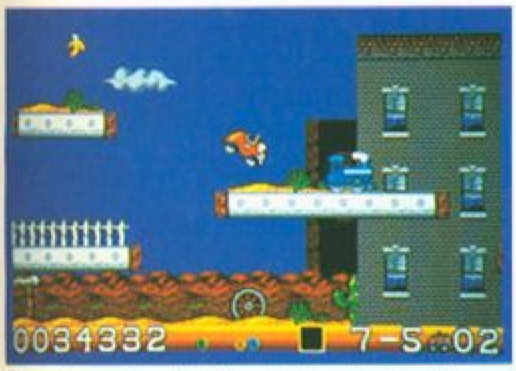
CARVUP

CORE DESIGN hit the road – and bounce off it!

What a jolly place Cartoon World is! Everyone is always smiling and laughing and having a very... er... nice time. That is, everyone except Captain Grim, a miserable sod of the first order. His aims are simple - he wants to cause no end of mischief and become an end-of-level baddy. So he invites his nasty chums, the Loony Toons, over to help him. And that's when the trouble really starts...

Pity poor little Arnie, the friendly car. His headlamps moist with tears, he watched in despair as everything turned bad in Cartoon World. Then his friends began to go missing, kidnapped by Grim and his cohorts and placed at the end of eight game stages. This was too much! Girding his gears, he set out to rescue his chums, save the world from badness and deal some justice to Captain Grim, auto-style!

Each graphically-unique stage consists of six levels of horizontally-scrolling platform pandemonium. You control Arnie as he trundles around. So intent is he on his quest that he never stops moving; you can only change his direction, left or right, or make him jump. Arnie's sense of self-preservation will cause him to turn around automatically and start travelling the opposite way if he reaches the edge of a platform.



Now you've seen 'em all - 'planes, trains and automobiles. Where's Steve Martin?

Arnie is an athletic auto, and can do three types of jump. The normal jump is accessed by simply pressing fire. However, pushing up at the same time will cause Arnie to jump higher, while pulling down causes Arnie to do a short hop, useful for descending platforms.

All the platforms have been infected with badness. Driving over them makes them good, and occasionally causes fruity bonuses to grow from the rejuvenated surface. If you're quick you can do a quick U-turn and pick them up for points before they disappear.

Other goodies drift down from the sky; some are worth points, some are letters which can be collected to form the words 'BONUS' or 'EXTRA' for points or a life, but most important are the extra weapons, like ejector seats and backfire, which will help fend off the Loony Toons patrolling the platforms. Keep an eye out for unusual bonuses awarded for doing certain tasks - sorry, no clues (but Core tell us to hunt out Mr Naa-Naa)!

Turn all the platforms to good before the time limit expires and a helicopter ally will fly in and airlift you to the next level. Fail and the Turbo Demon will appear and chase you round the screen until he catches and kills you.

At the end of each stage there's a bonus level: no baddies, no platforms, just loads of yummy goodies tumbling from the sky - catch 'em quick! Before you start the next level there's a brief but amusing animation of Arnie rescuing one of his friends. Turn all 48 levels to good and Grim's evil reign is at an end!

● **David Uphurch**

STAR CARS

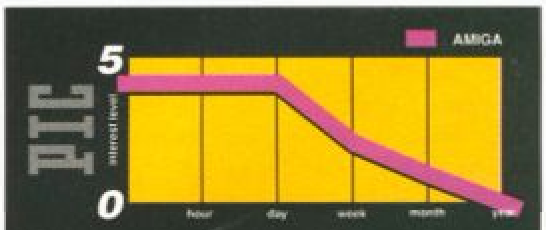
Arnie is not alone in the Famous Automobile Hall of Fame. Join us as we take take a wander through its musty chambers and meet...

BENNY, a yellow taxi cab with a heavy Brooklyn accent and a heavier attitude, helped rescue gumshoe Eddy Valiant and his framed Toon client Roger Rabbit from the nefarious clutches of Judge Doom, and in the process saved Toon Town from being 'dip'-ped, in the classic *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* Parallels with Arnie and his plight are purely coincidental (?).

CHITTY-CHITTY BANG-BANG, a car that could fly with the aid of thick matte lines, appeared in the film of the same name. So-called because of the racket he made, Chitty (to his friends) appeared along with the odious Dick Van Dyke (who has never been forgiven for his appalling 'Cockney' accent in *Mary Poppins*) and two saccharine-sweet child actors. The film was so desperate that it had to name the female lead 'Truly Scrumptious' just so that they had an excuse for a song of that title. Second Opinion Department: Actually, this film is probably one of the greatest achievements on celluloid, second only to *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*. (ACE Editor).

HERBIE, an 'intelligent' car, appeared in a whole series of Disney movies, such as *Herbie Goes Bananas* and *Herbie Goes To Monte Carlo* but, unfortunately, not the one most movie-goers wanted to see, *Herbie Go Away*.

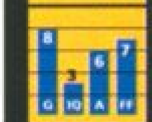
JOHNNY CAB provided a get-away vehicle for Doug Quaid, A.K.A. Arnold Schwarzenegger, in *Total Recall*. Schwarzenegger thanked him by ripping his head off, and not leaving a tip.



The colourful sprites bounce nimbly around the two-level parallax scrolling landscapes. The gameplay is very reminiscent of a console game: simple, enjoyable fun with lots of neat hidden features to keep your interest. The levels are not overly difficult to complete. Two minor playability niggles annoy: unavoidable new nasties appearing on screen when you're in mid-jump and the automatic turning, which takes time to get used to and still causes unnecessary life losses when the heat's on.

ACE RATING

760



AMIGA

The graphics and sound, although very pleasant and professionally done, are not mind-blowing. In fact, pleasant just about sums up the whole game. It never really excites you, nor does it really bore you. You'll plod your way through the not-impossible-to-complete levels until you reach the end. When you do, you're unlikely to return.

RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT

No-other versions planned

4D SPORTS DRIVING

Mindscape, ever keen to out-do the opposition, offer gamesplayers four dimensions of gameplay. And the fourth dimension is... YOU!

Squeeeeeeeeel! Go the tyres. *Vroooooom!* Goes the engine. *Craaaaaash!* Goes the gearbox. This is the world of *4D Sports Driving* and, apart from a couple of niggles, it's a damn fine game.

Neither an out-and-out race game like *Indy 500* or a stunt program like *Hard Driving*, *4D* (provisionally entitled Skid Marks hur hur) delivers – largely successfully – on both counts.

Inevitably, before you can start handbraking your way through pelican crossings, there's some auto business to take care of. The main menu branches into Car, Track, Option and Opponent sub screens. A host of cars are available (see panel), each displayed together with a breakdown of its performance, roadholding, acceleration curve etc. Pick the best to suit the features of the tortuous track ahead. Options offer standard toggles, like music on or off but also the level of graphic definition. Landscape features can be reduced or turned off enabling players with relatively slow PCs to enjoy a swift screen update.

Opponents range from useless nancy boy Sunday drivers like Bernie Rubber to superskill Smoking Joe Stallin who seems to have some other-worldly affinity with any car and never gets anything wrong, even if you saddle him with a decrepit old rustbucket. Each driver has specific problem areas (fear of heights, bends etc). and their weaknesses can be exploited during the race.

Each opponent has designed a track, and obviously they fare better on their home territory. A track editor is included, offering that Skalextric "Let's build an impossible course" facility. If you prefer to go for a fast time you can opt to race against the clock.

Tracks comprise six basic elements; straights, curves, banked sections, loop-the-loops, barrel rolls and chicanes. These can be put together in pretty much any order you want to produce a fast, slow or unfinishable race.

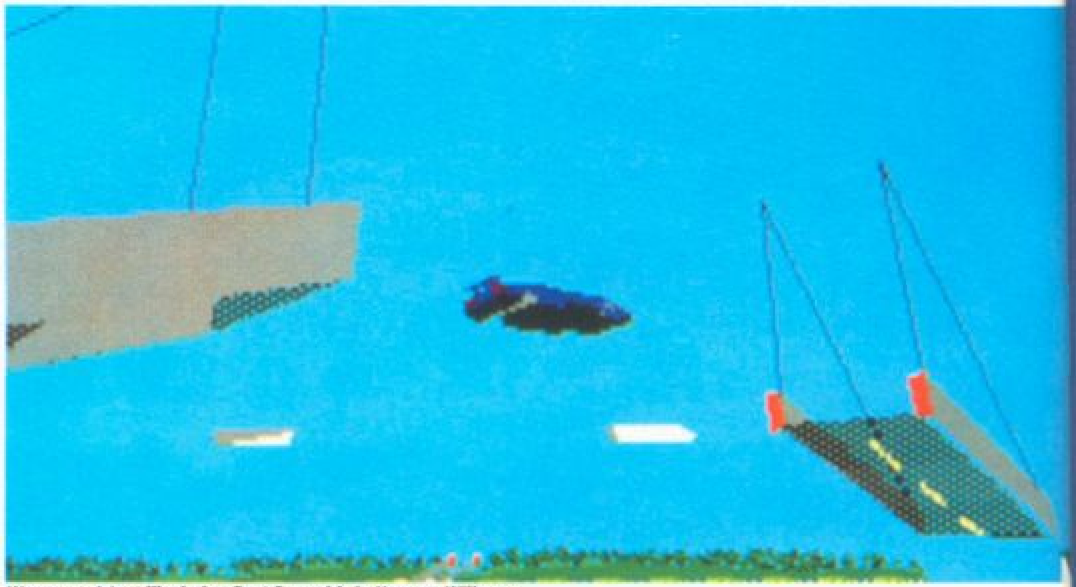
The driving action is depicted (initially) from within your car; the steering wheel and instruments appropriate to the vehicle. A helpful blue dot on the steering wheel indicates the degree of turn. Other drivers, on the whole, are fairly considerate. They won't carve you up and generally avoid the idiotic driving practices in which human players so frequently indulge.

Some cars are better than others for certain courses. And some are completely useless. Vehicles at the lower end of the power scale are unable to make long distance jumps, and frequently belly-flop and explode on the tarmac.

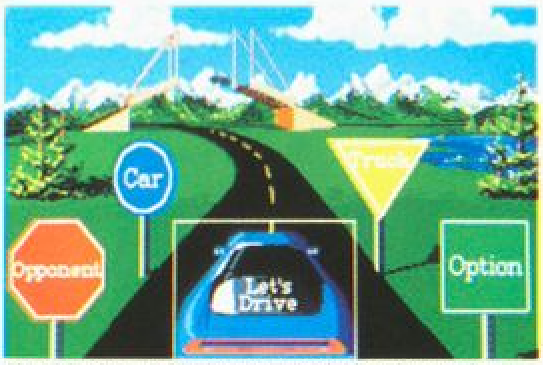
Spectacular wins/accidents can be viewed over and over thanks to the replay option. The viewpoint of the playback can be from either rostrum, helicopter or in-car camera. You can use these facilities to alter your view while actually driving, but my auto-success didn't noticeably improve as a result.

4D Driving performs its balancing act of being both an accurate simulation and a knock-about motor larf quite well. The variety of tracks together with the edit facility offer lasting entertainment while the easy control of the car means it's nice and easy to get into.

● **Jim Douglas**



Wooooaaa! Just like being Burt Reynolds in Hooper. Will your Lambo's suspension stand up to this treatment for long?

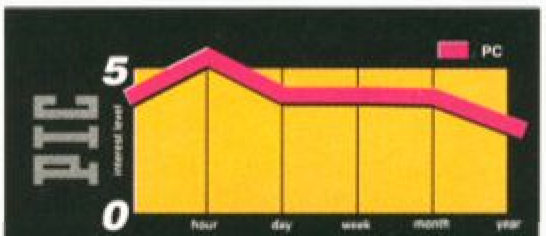


The Main Menu. Guide that mouse and select those options!

ONE CAREFUL DRIVER...

Mindscape's Special Offers with low mileage and relatively little accident damage are:

25th Anniversary Lamborghini Countach
Ferrari GTO
Jaguar HJR9IMSA
Lancia Delta HF Integrale 16v
Lamborghini LM-002
Porsche 962
Porsche Carrera 4
Porsche March Indy
Corvette ZR1
Acura NSX
Audi Quattro Sport



Not quite a top score to begin with, since there's a bit of ninnying around to be done through menu screens before the action can begin. After an hour or so you'll be hooked, increasing your control on the car, and actually winning some races. The track editor offers long term variety, but the tracks supplied should keep you busy for a good few weeks. Thoroughly enjoyable.

ACE RATING

880

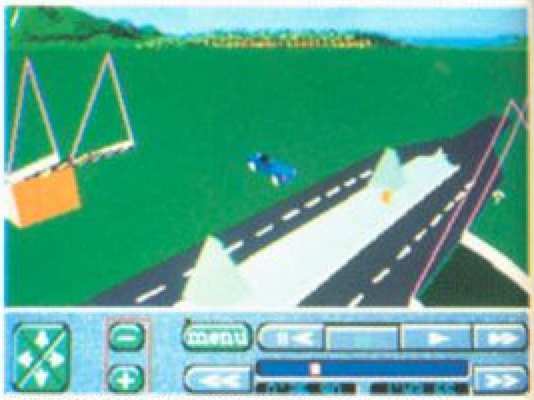
IBM PC

The thoughtful inclusion of the detail switch-off means 4D Driving can be fast and fun even on slow machines. The only problem with this feature is that it becomes a bit difficult to see which way the track is going, since only the road quite near to your car is plotted on the screen. A hard drive is really necessary, since the disk is accessed between each drive and each menu screen. Playing on floppies is a bit of a trial of patience.

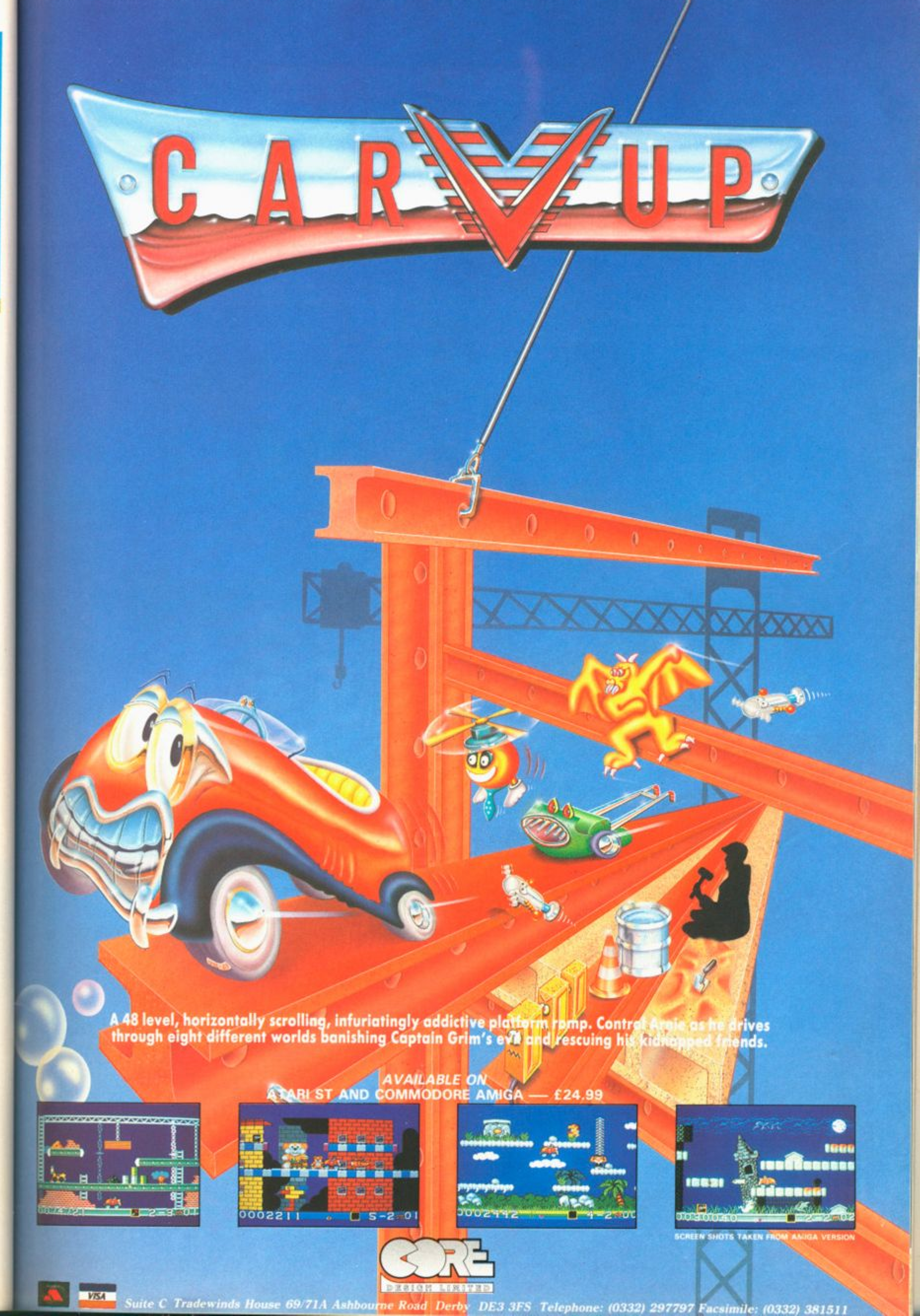
RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC	£24.99	IMMINENT
ATARI ST	£24.99	JAN '91
AMIGA	£24.99	JAN '91

No other versions planned



And let's take a look at that in slow motion with our helicopter camera.... Stunning!



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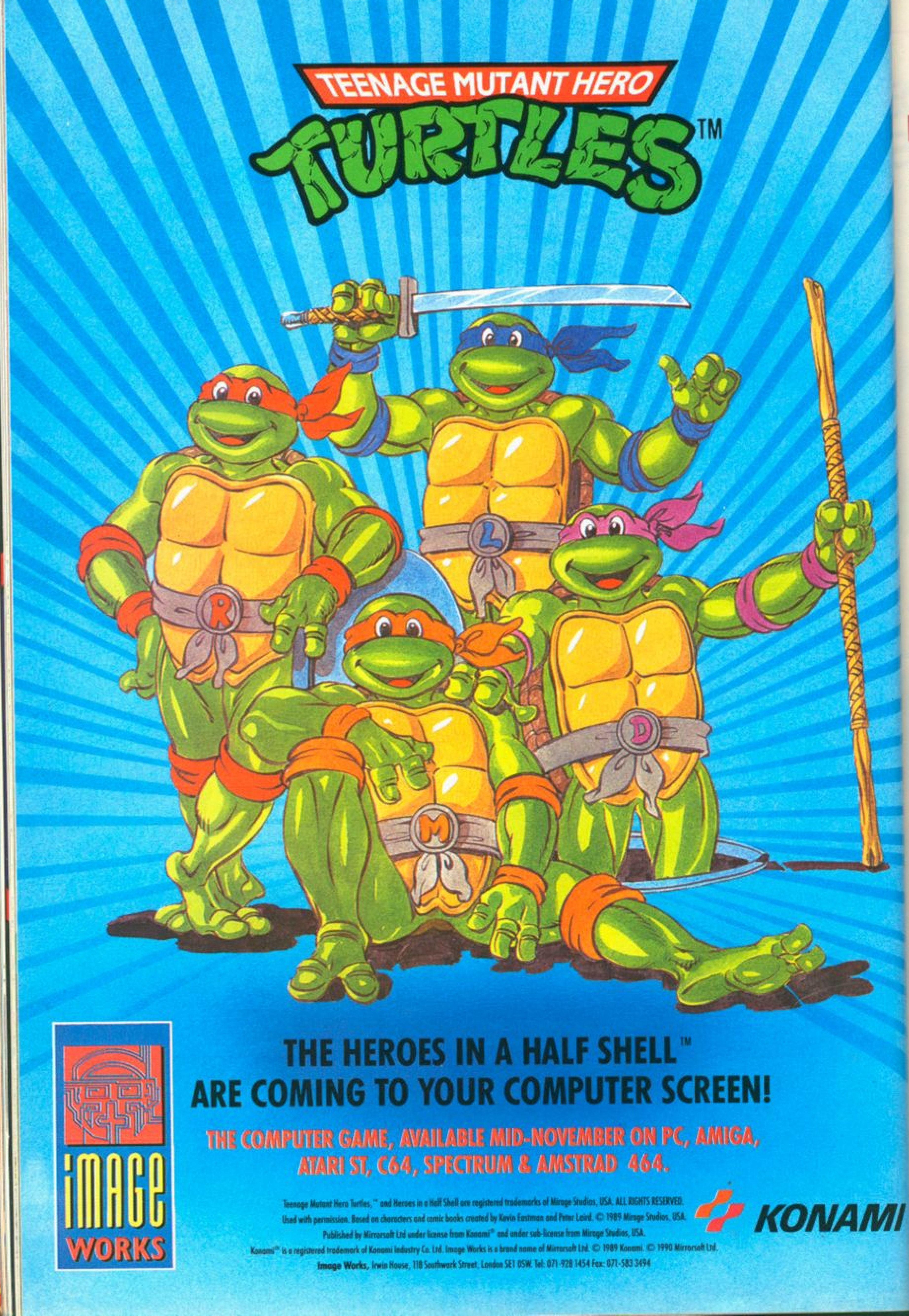

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DRAGON BREED

No dragon your feet! Activision are hot to trot with their latest scorcher. Flame on!

Dragon Breed, but for one element, would be shockingly similar to *R-Type*; Horrific odds are stacked against you. Collectible power-ups offer increasingly deadly battle equipment. And there's a woppa-monsta at the end of each level.

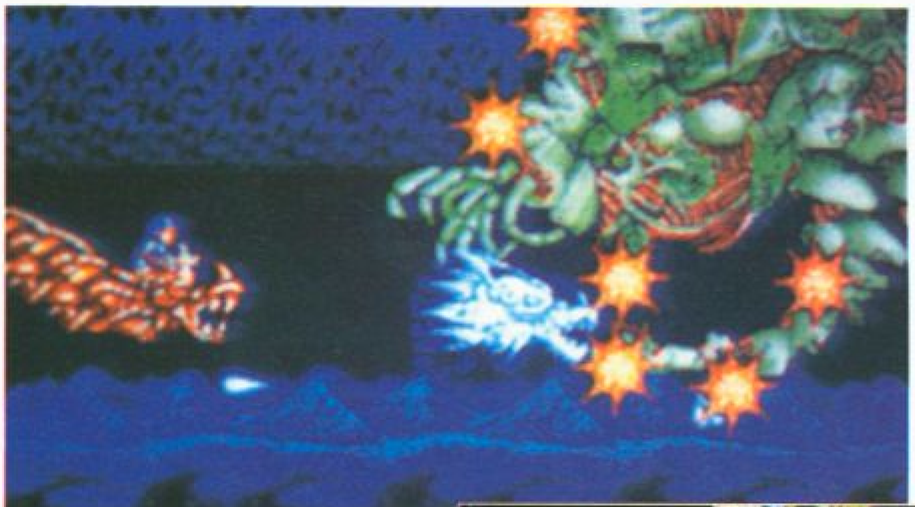
So it's clear that a new exciting element is pretty flaming vital. In *Dragon Breed*'s case the added ingredient is the deadly tail of the dragon you fly.

The standard power-up gameplay goes out of the window to a certain degree and there are are new skills to be learned. The tail of your dragon snakes around and is impervious to enemy attack. It kills most aliens on contact, and inflicts heavy hits on even the most resilient bad guys.

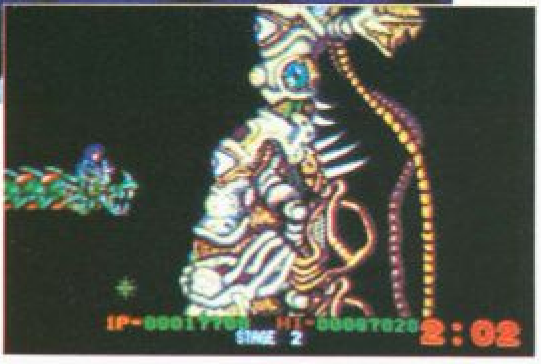
Players making the mistake of trying to play in straightforward shoot-out style won't last long. The volume of aliens and incoming shots on the screen simply can't be dodged; there just isn't enough room. Instead, you must continually flick your tail up and down, sweeping away the bad guys and their bullets like some apocalyptic spring-clean. Even the head of your dragon will kill the enemy on contact.

All this destructive power makes you feel thoroughly invincible for at least ten seconds, until you realise quite how vulnerable your dragon rider is. Take a single shot, or so much as touch an alien, and he's history. It's this balance between vulnerability and killing power which make controlling your dragon both a joy and a trial.

Your basic dragon, no spoilers or fluffy dice, comes with a single-shot fire capacity and not much else. Toasting one of the occasional blue harpies which fly by will produce a power-up; these change your dragon's abilities (see 'Breath Test' box). Needless to say each is more or less helpful in each stage.



You have to fly underneath this big beastie. Sending a big dragon-spit toward the orange stars should clear the way a little.



The end of Level 2. Shoot out the eyes in order to get through. Innocent looking but deadly stars rain down onto your dragon.

BREATH TEST

Power-ups throughout the game increase the toughness of your dragon. Witness:

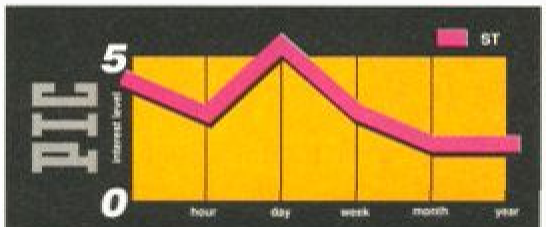
RED: Your dragon will now shoot flames. Rapid depression of the fire button builds a long flame shooting out of your dragon's mouth. Not bad, but it does require some hefty fire-button action. Only offers help on a horizontal level.

BLUE: You can link the front and end of your dragon, forming a loop, but your rider will be on the outside of the loop, somewhat exposed. Each time you fire, deadly blue liquid fall our of the... er... end of your dragon. Not bad, but leaves the rider prone to attack.

SILVER: Each time you fire, little dragons fly out and home in on any enemies on the screen.

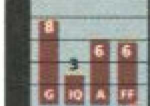
GOLD: Again, you can link your dragon up, but your rider is on the inside. Very secure.

Collecting gemstones will increase the power of the particular power-up, offering eight-way fire, rapid shots, etc.



Definitely a bit of an oddity. *Dragon Breed* is visually appealing and the novelty value of the tail swishing will really grab your attention. After playing for about half an hour though, the frustration of the dragon movement considerably saps the interest. The Funometer peaks after a day or so as you get to grips with the controls, but ultimately *Dragon Breed* has little long term appeal, and it'll be lucky to get much of an airing after the second week.

ACE RATING
720



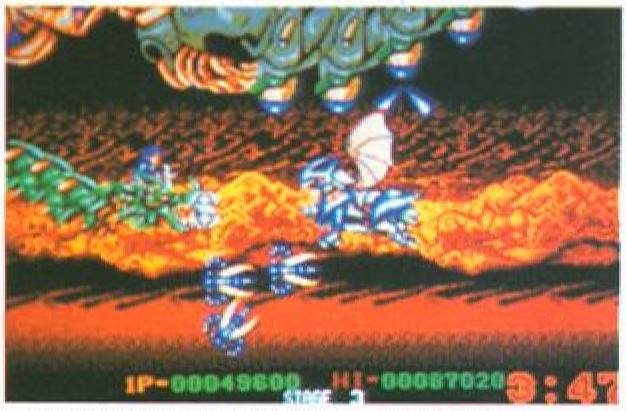
ATARI ST

The scrolling is pretty good, but some of the sprite movement leaves a bit to be desired. Later levels feature heavily patterned backgrounds and it becomes tricky to spot the smaller incoming enemies. The nature of the game makes you want to get straight back into battle, but there's a rather irritating pause (albeit short) between each life and this slows down the action.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	December

No other versions planned



Flying a basic dragon on Level 3. Chances of survival here are slim, as the roof-mounted installations fire like there's no tomorrow!

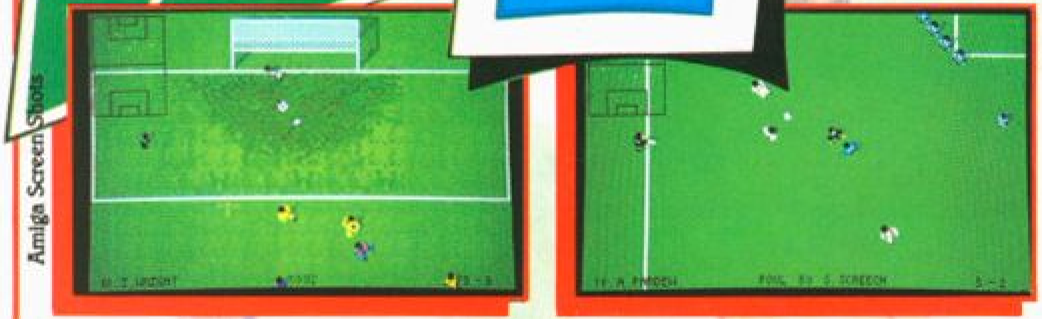
Holding down fire builds a great ball of dragon spit in the mouth of your beast. Release fire and it'll shoot out and demolish virtually everything in its wake.

Lose a life, and all your power-ups go with it. Now this is where the game becomes a little tiresome. Without at least one power-up, some stages are nigh-on impossible. You're completely surrounded by bad guys and the incoming shot rate is nearly insurmountable.

Provided you're willing to be sent back to the start of the stage again and again and you're patient enough to get to grips with the tail control it could prove satisfying, but I suspect that most players will become too frustrated and come back less frequently.

● **Jim Douglas**

A NEW
SOCCER



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THE ONE - Ultimate soccer simulation. **96%**
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AMIGA FORMAT - Best footy game to have appeared on any machine.
ST FORMAT - What a game! Gem to play. Magic. **90%**
C & VG - Championship winning material. **95%**
GAMES MACHINE - Probably the best sports game ever. **92%**
COMMODORE USER - No other footie game can touch it. **90%**
AMIGA ACTION - Surpasses all other football games. **93%**
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DIENSION IN
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ine. **94%**

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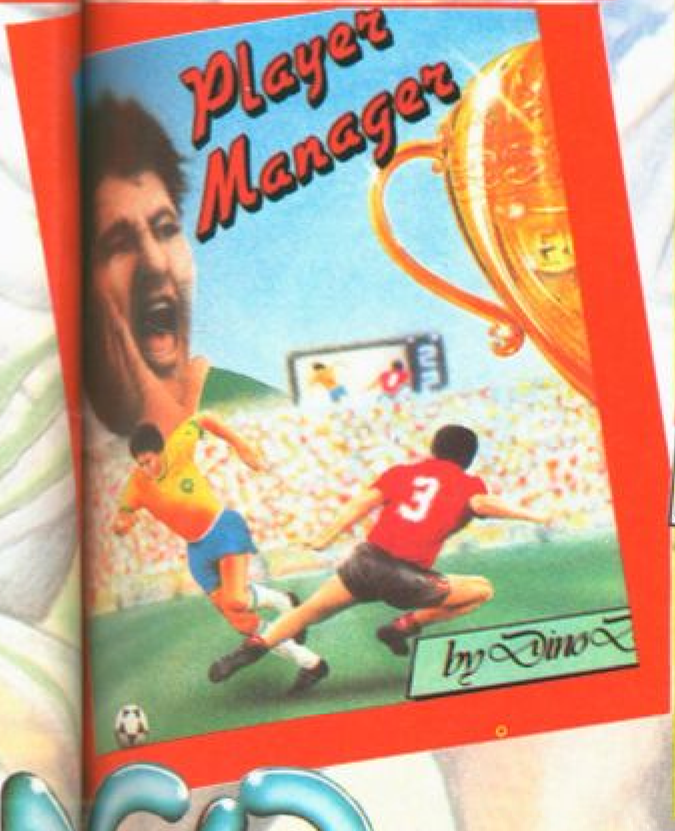
Stamina 85
Resilience 104
Aggression 41
Passing
Shooting
Tackling
Keeping
Done



KICK OFF 2
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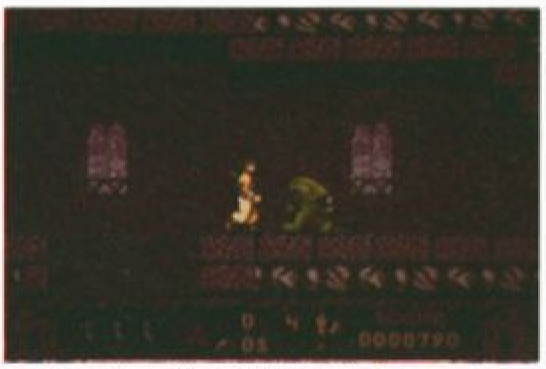
Deathtrap

Don't bother with Deathtrap if you're looking for an original storyline. How many times have you heard this one before? - "Valiant young prince enters magical labyrinth of evil sorcerer, armed only with a dagger, takes on horrific demons and terrifying deathtraps, collects treasure and magic potions, defeats hideous guardians and finally recovers the source of the wizard's powers."

Pretty familiar stuff, but Deathtrap is one of the better efforts along these lines, as you can tell from the excellent opening sequence featuring multi-level parallax scrolling backgrounds, excellently-animated characters, fine music, beautiful backdrops and convincing lighting effects. Once the Prince Abi, has entered the castle, you start off with a few simple enemies to dispatch to get you into the mood. The backgrounds of the five levels, including castle, catacombs, ice waste, Hell and Rot, are excellently drawn, and the multi-way scrolling very smooth (except, for some reason, when Abi crouches down to crawl through a tunnel). The action soon picks up and things begin to get on top of you (literally as well as metaphorically) as the monsters attack from all sides, and deadfalls drop from the ceiling and crush you.

The monsters include ghosts, giant frogs, fireball-throwing phantoms, leeches, grabbing hands, stomping demons, volants (rock-dropping birds) and parasitic aliens. Each demands a different weapon or technique to polish it off, and some leave behind bottles of potions which you must collect; red for weapons, green for spells, blue for curative powers. You can also find potions and weapons in chests, though some contain nasty surprises.



Snot funny! Bleurg! It's dark'n'dank in the dungeons and there's ' orrible beasties all around.

Swords and sorcery, platforms and ladders, frogs and phantoms – is arcade adventure Deathtrap more than a load of warlocks?

Below the main display are panels showing the potions collected; the level of the labyrinth; the weapon in use and its strength; remaining lives; and the state of your health in the form of an orb, the colour of which changes from green to orange to red. If you die, you die messily, reduced to a heap of offal in the most nauseating way.

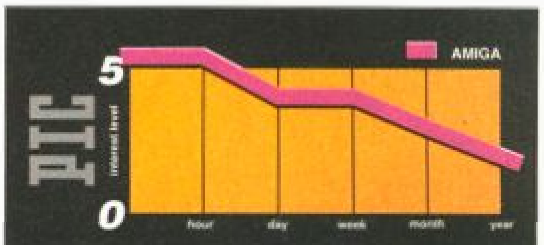
Press the space bar and you move to the menu screen where you can trade amounts of potion for new weapons, spells and cures. Weapons include fireballs, bouncing daggers, boomerangs, lightning, mind power which acts like a smart bomb killing all enemies on screen, and a magical Friend who will follow you around engaging smaller enemies while you deal with the big ones. A second player can control the friend, otherwise he's computer-controlled. Your friend comes armed with a short-range gun, but you can buy him extra weapons including exploding shots and mortar shots.

Spells can be useful too; a Wizard's curse can disorientate your friend and making him difficult to control, but blue potion will restore him. A green potion is useful to restore him to full power, while other potions can cure paralysis, de-curse weapons and increase shield strength. You can also become invisible, though this doesn't protect you from shots or hits.

Control is by joystick only, with the height of jumps controlled by the time for which the joystick is held in the up position. Leaping from level to level demands some skill and timing, but there's not much in the way of mapping demanded; the main challenge of the game is in fighting off the attacks of the monsters.

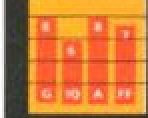
Though there isn't a single element of Deathtrap which hasn't been seen in dozens of other games, this one scores highly in all departments and can be recommended for fans of graphically sophisticated arcade adventures with the emphasis on action.

● **Chris Jenkins**



The PIC of an arcade adventure depends largely on how long it takes you to finish it! Deathtrap has everything going for it except originality, and while it should enthral you first time through, it's unlikely to keep you coming back for more once you've seen all its secrets

ACE RATING
840



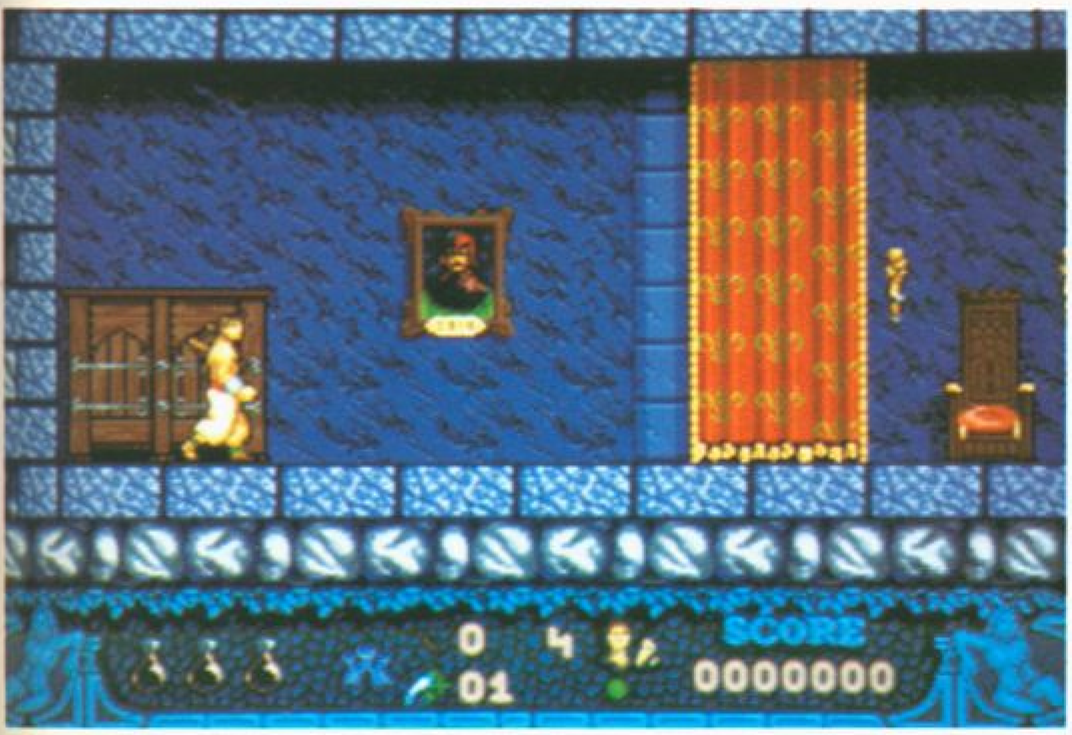
AMIGA

Excellent graphics and sound make Deathtrap initially captivating, but with more inventive gameplay it might have become an arcade-adventure classic. A worthwhile purchase for Amiga owners looking for some well-presented and easy-to-get-into arcade puzzle fun.

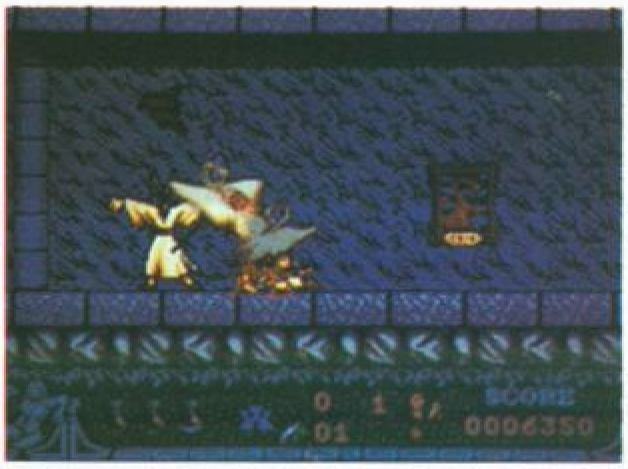
RELEASE DETAILS

AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW
ATARI ST	£24.99	Early 91

No other versions planned



At the start of your mission in the castle section. This is your first and last moment's peace.



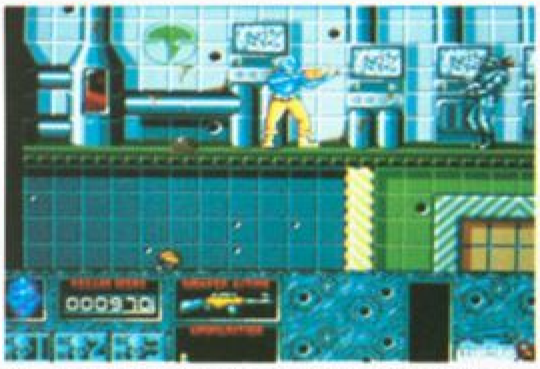
Beset by flying beasties. It may not be original but it looks mighty fine!

ROGUE TROOPER

KRISALIS presents a vision in blue genes

Nu-Earth was once a beautiful blue and green gem at the edge of the galaxy. Then war broke out between the Norts and the Southers. As the two opposing factions clashed for the planet's domination, Nu-Earth was turned into a barren wasteland. The atmosphere, polluted by bacteria and chemicals, became a lethally poisonous fog.

The Souther scientists developed the Genetic Infantry – blue-skinned warriors capable of surviving on the planet's ravaged surface without protection suits. Each had a Bio-Chip implanted in his brain. Should a G.I become fatally wounded then the Chip could be removed and implanted in a new body, thus preserving valuable training and experience.

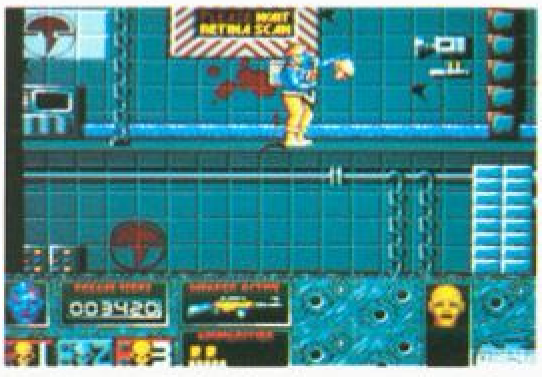


Rogue's health is indicated by the amount of blood splattering his face (shown top right of the control panel). You've stolen a rifle so now you can shoot back and live longer

Tragically, a Souther general-turned-traitor informed the Norts of an impending G.I. strike and nearly all were massacred. Only Rogue escaped death, and salvaged the Bio-Chips of his three buddies, Gunnar, Bagman and Helm. Rogue is captured by the Norts and his equipment taken from him. As the game begins, Rogue has just escaped from his cell...

HEADHUNTING

The game is split into four levels. In Level One the screen scrolls as you guide a side-view Rogue around the Nort prison, searching for his equipment (a gun, a backpack and a helmet, homes to Gunnar, Bagman and Helm, respectively), evidence as to the traitor's identity and, ultimately, a ship to get him back to Souther lines. Until you find a weapon you've got to kick and punch your way through the enemy 'droids and troops.

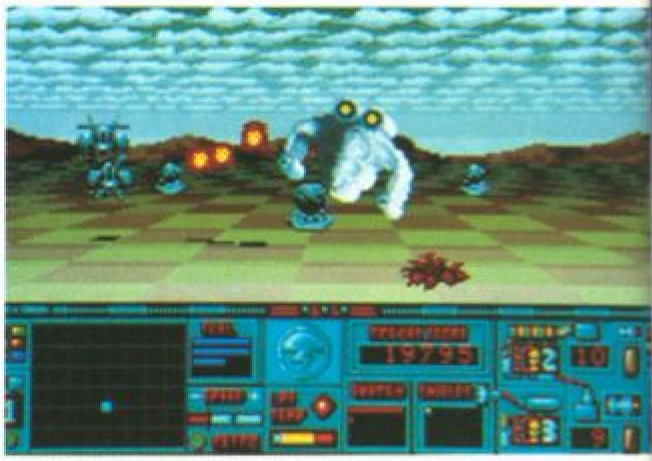


The shop screen – Bland and Brass have unscrupulous tendencies so be wary.

Tasks have to be performed before access to certain areas of the base is permitted. A particularly gruesome example of this is the retina scan – you can't get past it unless you find a severed head in the infirmary and use it to con the detector!

Computer terminals have to be searched for pass cards and other useful items, and switches toggled to turn off electric floors and such-like. The Bio-Chips, when found, will flash on the control panel at the bottom of the screen if they can help you. For example, one part of the base is pitch black. Helm will flash. Select him with the function keys and he will switch on infra-red goggles to help you see in the dark.

In Level Two the view switches to Space Harrier-style 3D. You pilot a stolen Nort ship in pursuit of the prison commandant. Your ship is under a constant barrage of fire from Nort ships and ground bases. Give as good as you get. Rogue's Bio-Chipped chums shout out warnings on incoming craft from time to time. Survive long enough and you'll eventually catch up with the commandant's ship - pump him full of plasma until he explodes. From the wreckage you can retrieve a device which allows you to fly into Souther territory.

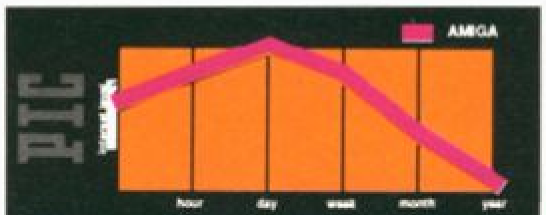


Catching the Commandant. If wanted, your ship can be turned into a transparent outline so that the enemy flak is easier to spot. This *Space Harrier*–style section is the weakest part of the game

You then meet Bland and Brass, purveyors of ship's add-ons to the outcast. Using points earned shooting the Norts you can buy special equipment for the ship! Level Three is similar to Two, except the action takes place over Souther territory infected by 'Dreamweaver' hallucinatory gas - beware pink elephants!

Level Four and you've finally reached the Souther command base. Similar in style to Level One, you've got to get your evidence to high command – and you've arrived just as the Norts are making a major offensive on the base...

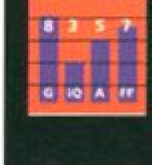
● **David Upchurch**



Not a game that immediately grabs your attention. It takes a bit of playing to realise that the game (3D section excepted) has far more depth than first thought. Arcade adventurers who enjoy a tough challenge and a strong shoot-'em-up element should find this their sort of game.

ACE RATING

795



AMIGA

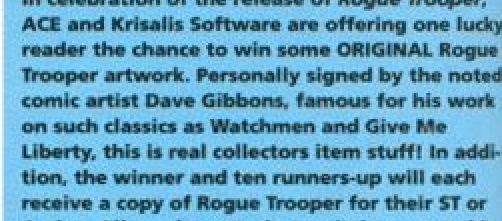
Graphics, though a little flat-looking, are nicely animated. The scrolling is very smooth, and the 3D sprites grow and shrink convincingly, although they're a little small. The tunes are competently done but pretty standard issue. The tasks on Levels 1 and 4 are varied and interesting, with some neat graphical touches. Levels 2 and 3 are a little easy and overlong, but act as a suitably frenetic antidote to the exploring. Rogue fans note that the manual includes reprinted stories!

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

ROGUE REWARDS



In celebration of the release of *Rogue Trooper*, ACE and Krisalis Software are offering one lucky reader the chance to win some ORIGINAL Rogue Trooper artwork. Personally signed by the noted comic artist Dave Gibbons, famous for his work on such classics as Watchmen and Give Me Liberty, this is real collectors item stuff! In addition, the winner and ten runners-up will each receive a copy of Rogue Trooper for their ST or Amiga. All you have to do to win is answer this simple question: Who scripted the last series of Rogue Trooper to appear in 'the Galaxy's greatest comic' 2000AD?

Send your answer, along with your name, address and computer format (Amiga or ST) to: ACE on the Rogue, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The first out of the hat on the closing date of 8th January 1990 will win the artwork and a copy of the game, while the next ten will just receive the game.

THE ULTIMATE Ride

Open up the throttle for 'The Ultimate Ride'

Tame your dream machine in the Ultimate bike racing challenge-The Ultimate Ride brings two wheeled action hurtling into your living room at its raw, nerve tingling best.

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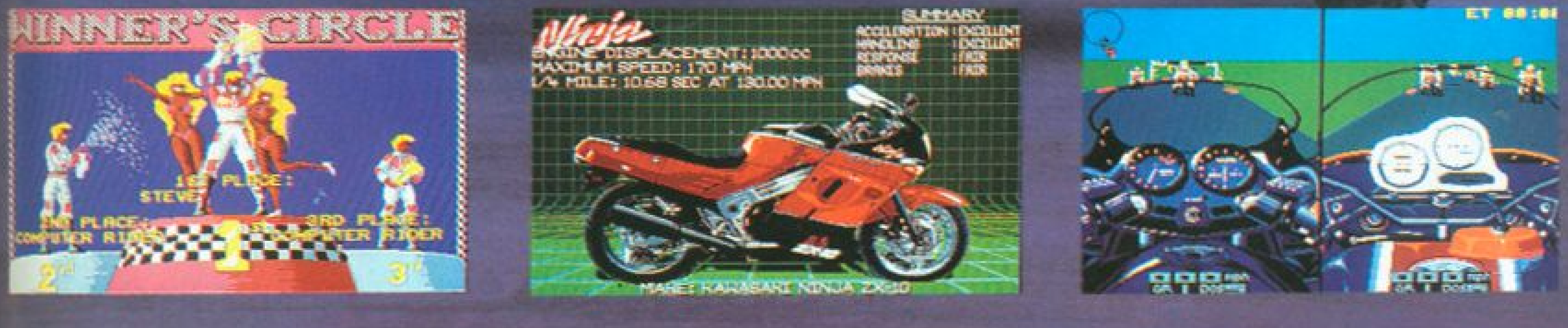
The Ultimate Ride even lets you design your own course using the unique Artificial Intelligence track editor. Challenge a friend on the simultaneous two player option or create custom disks of your favourite track and bike.

The Ultimate Ride combines ultra fast road racing graphics with unequalled presentation and animation- This is a real interactive racing movie.

Can you take the power?

MINDSCAPE

Actual screen shots



ENGINE DISPLACEMENT: 1000cc
MAXIMUM SPEED: 170 MPH
1/4 MILE: 10.68 SEC AT 130.00 MPH

SUMMARY
ACCELERATION : EXCELLENT
HANDLING : EXCELLENT
RESPONSE : FAIR
BRAKES : FAIR

MAKE: KAWASAKI NINJA ZX-10

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The crazy reflex game that will drive you loony !
GOODNESS, GRACIOUS, GREAT BALLS OF FIRE !
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Haunted Castle, Scotland :
Help little Tommy rescue his mother in this thrilling, chilling arcade/adventure game ! Only if you dare.
ST - AG - PC

You are Zad. Plan your strategy, combat evil, and become the supreme ruler of Euroland !
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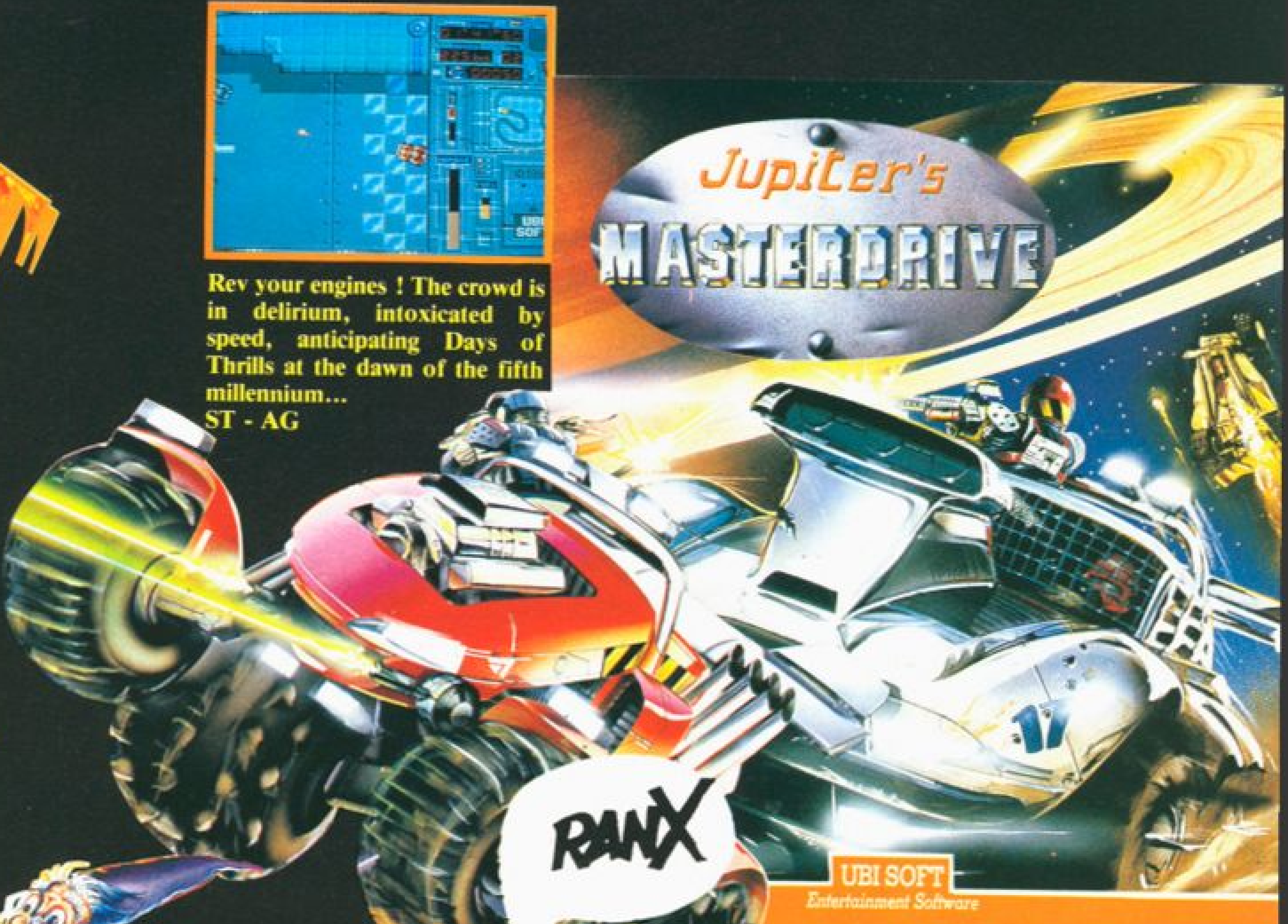
Jupiter's
MASTERDRIVE
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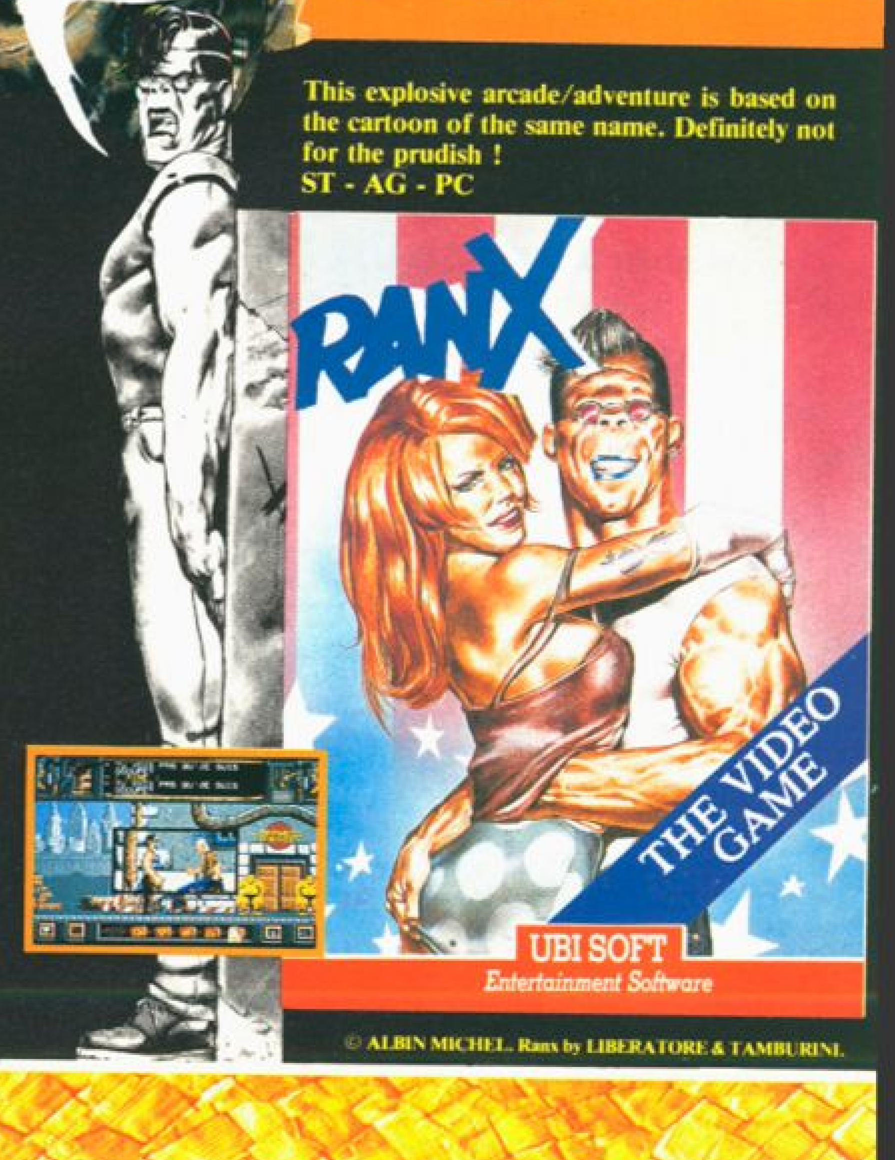
Rev your engines ! The crowd is in delirium, intoxicated by speed, anticipating Days of Thrills at the dawn of the fifth millennium…
ST - AG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RANX
THE VIDEO GAME
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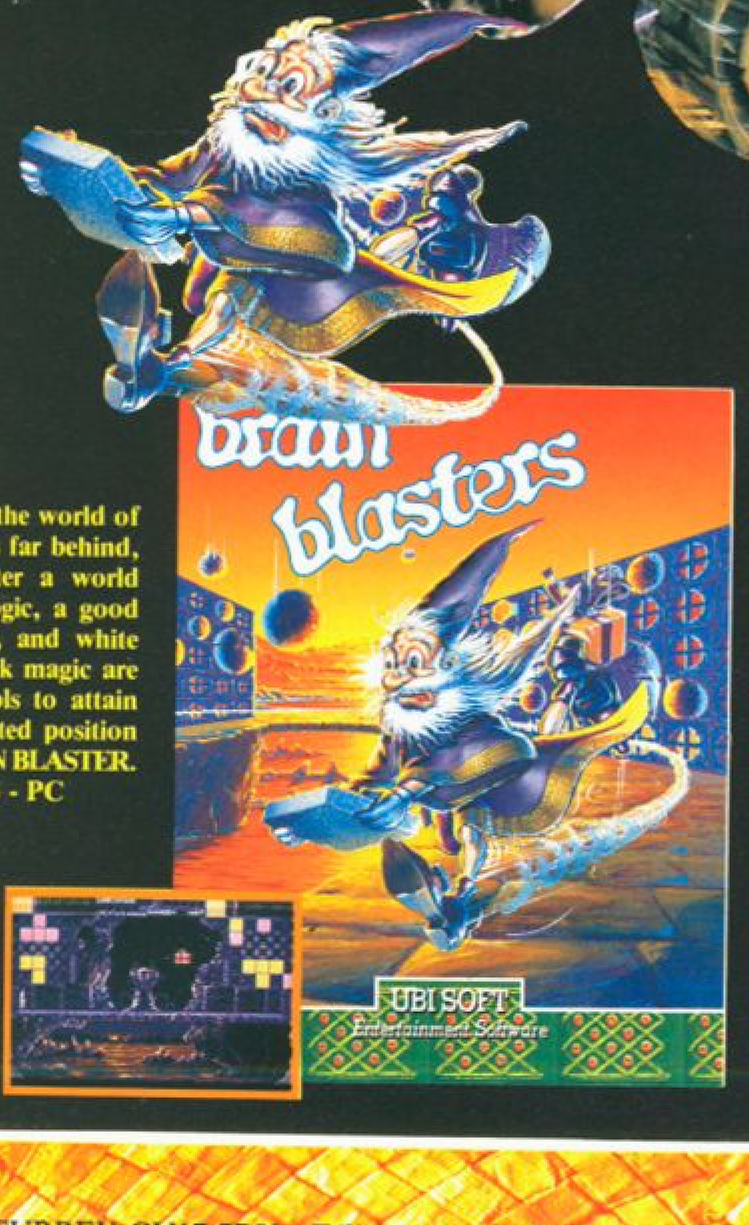
This explosive arcade/adventure is based on the cartoon of the same name. Definitely not for the prudish !
ST - AG - PC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ST - AG - PC

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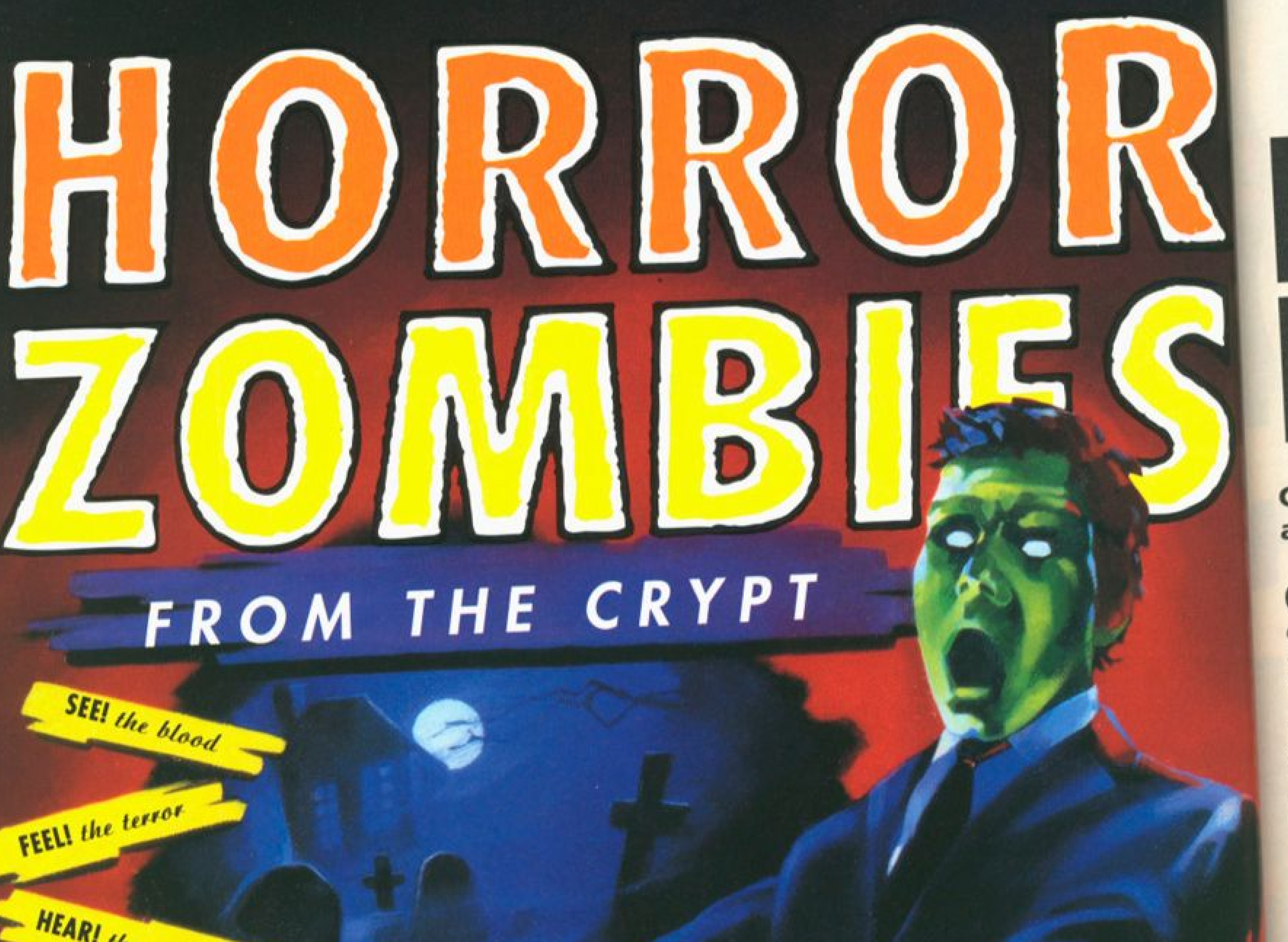
HORROR
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FROM THE CRYPT
SEE! the blood
FEEL! the terror
HEAR! the screams
Evil that knows no bounds!
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RABIO LEPUS

Cute PC Engine bunnies and it's not even Easter!

Get this for an off-beat game scenario. Rabio Lepus is a conversion of an obscure Japanese coin-op in which you control a rocket-powered missile-firing bunny rabbit equipped with a pair of boxing gloves.

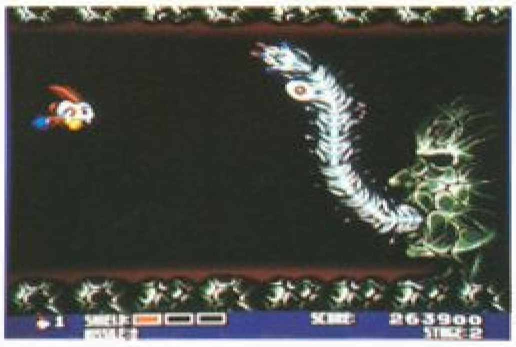
Some nasty aliens with pointed ears and tridents have kidnapped two beautiful bunny girls and your rabbit king. It's enough to send anyone hopping mad. So you immediately launch a rescue mission in a spacecraft shaped like a cute bunny rabbit with floppy red ears and large buck teeth.

Rabio Lepus is a multi-stage horizontal parallax-scrolling shoot'em-up with quite a bite. Standard alien space soldiers set the stage for some imaginative and unusual guardian sprites such as a four-legged beast and a white ghost who looks just like Casper from the spooky cartoon series.

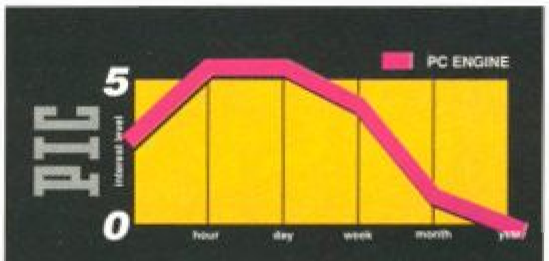
Your tough armoured bunny (it can take three hits) is armed with endless cannon fire and a limited supply of missiles. Carrot canisters are located at strategic points throughout the scrollscape, shoot them and a power-up pops out. These collectibles include missile ammunition packs, bonus money bags and life-saving carrots. If you get too close to an object, your bunny automatically gives it a left hook.

If you really dig your bunny sprite you can even buy a cuddly real-life replica from the Japanese software developer. I've already ordered mine.

• Rik Haynes



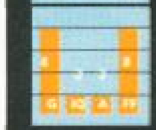
Eeek! The dreaded Tongue Monster of Thring! Rabid Rabbit must face a number of simililarly odd monsters on his mission.



The original Rabio Lepus coin-op is so unknown I've only ever seen it in one arcade it's still a good game though. The same goes for the PC Engine version, the game presents you with quite a few difficult sequences to blast your way through. Those just-one-more-go and wonder-what's-next syndromes will keep you hooked till you've finished the game.

ACE RATING

849



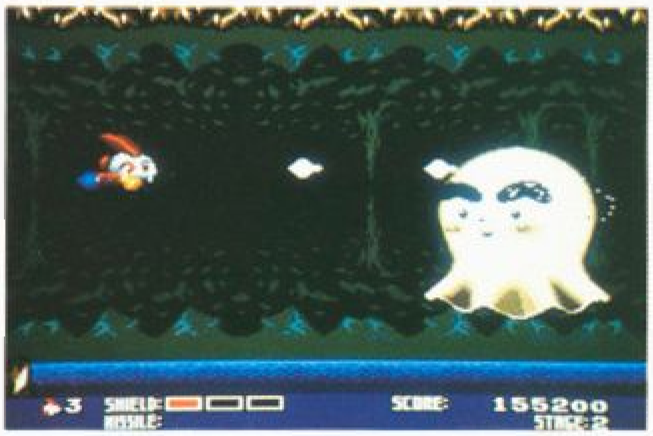
PC ENGINE

Only superficial differences separate the PC Engine and coin-op versions of Rabio Lepus. Great graphics, the colourful explosions are particularly impressive. Only two things annoyed me: the horrible soundtracks which cannot be switched-off and the game continue option throwing you right back to the start of the current stage. Things like this can make you seriously depressed.

RELEASE DETAILS

PC ENGINE	£34.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned



Woo! This end of level fellow may not look especially tough, and indeed he isn't. A couple of hits will ground him.

HELLFIRE

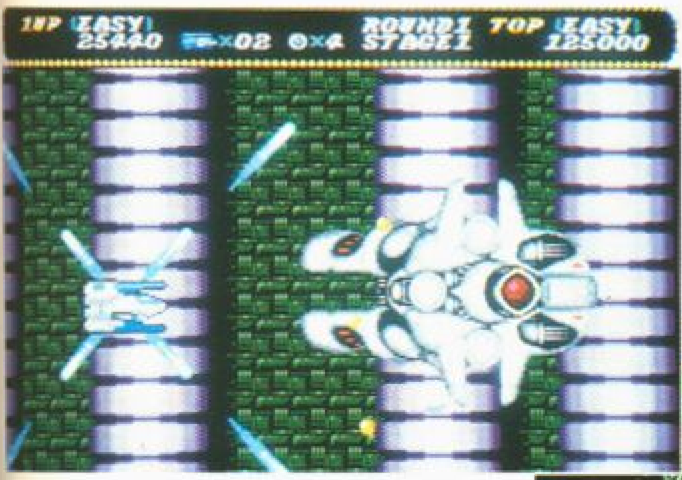
Is this NCS/TOAPLAN Megadrive shoot a scorcher?

"Psychotic aliens are blasting you in all directions," tell me something I didn't know. This four megabit cartridge packs a six level horizontally-scrolling shoot'em-up with some of the most amateurish graphics I've seen in a Megadrive release.

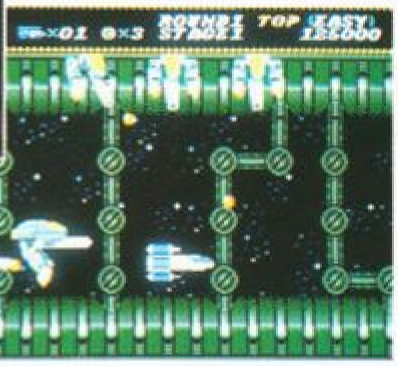
The only novel feature of the game is your ability to blast sprites in multiple directions. Your spacecraft can fire forwards, backwards, up and down, and at four angles at the flick of button C on your joypad. In addition to these weapons, you can fire a megablast beam and collect extra firepower.

With very little in the way of variety or fun gameplay, Hellfire is strictly for dedicated joypad jockeys with cash to burn.

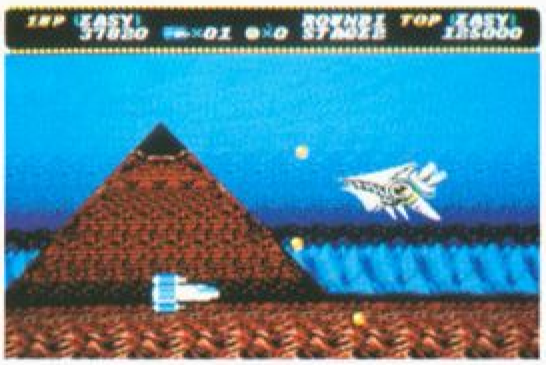
• Rik Haynes

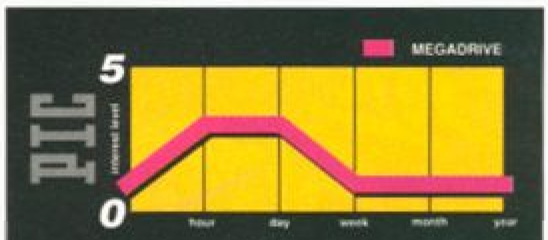


Blasting one of the guardians with full directionals.



The colour of your ship denotes your current direction of fire.





The makers of this cart must have been stumped for some graphics designers when they produced Hellfire. This is the first time I've ever had to fly a chunky slice of sprite and shoot fish-heads, and I hope it will be my last. On the upside, the visuals are bright and colourful. Audio is split between thumpy sound FX and bouncy soundtracks.

ACE RATING

600

SEGA MEGADRIVE

When that nice chap Mr Upchurch told me this was a coin-op conversion, I was shocked. I'd never seen Hellfire in any arcade and couldn't believe it would take that many 10p's. Hellfire isn't that bad, but it's not much better than average. The only original feature of the game is the selectable firing directions of your ship - it's hardly worth buying a shoot'em-up simply for this facility. Thunderforce III still ranks No.1 in the Megadrive horiz shooter stakes.

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE	£34.99	OUT NOW

No other versions planned

Virgin FOR games galore

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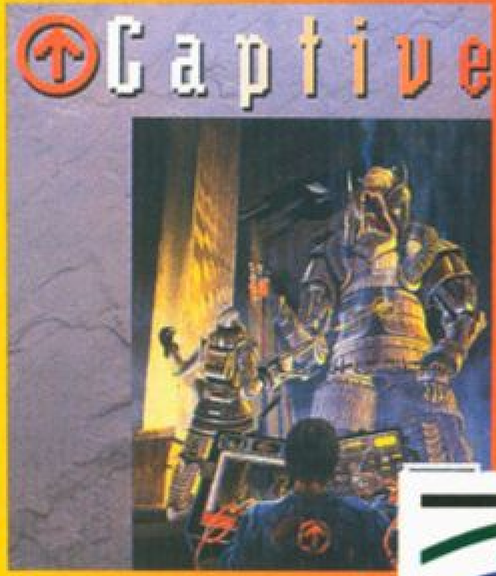

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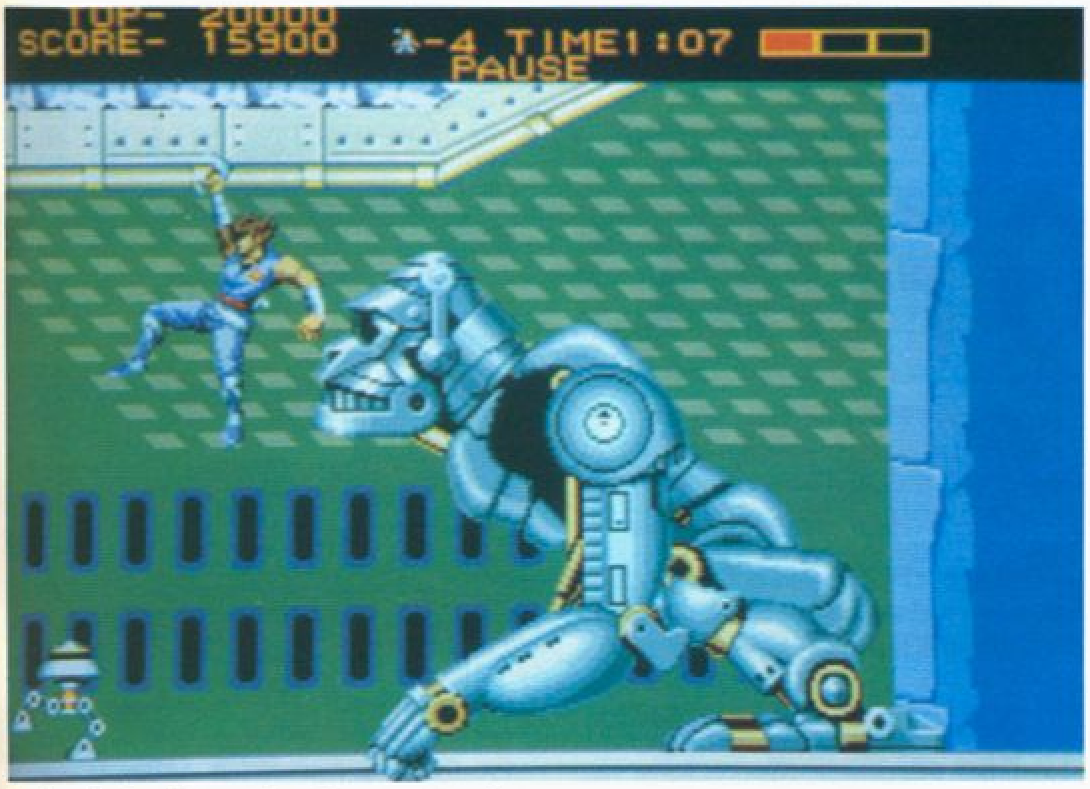


Hanging on for dear life as guy the gorilla prepares to punch your lights out.

STRIDER

CAPCOM's classic coin-op finally strides over to the Megadrive

The Eastern Block Communists may have fallen from power last Christmas, but this hasn't stopped Capcom from converting its commie-bashing coin-op onto Sega's 16-bit baby. But is Megadrive *Strider* as good a conversion as US Gold's effort on the Amiga? You bet it is!

Set in the middle of the next century, *Strider* is a way above average scrolling platform arcade game. You control the nimble Strider spy on a mission to steal Soviet secrets from deep inside the Russian countryside. Unfortunately, the Russkies have other ideas and throw a myriad of obstacles, KGB agents and mechanical monsters to halt your every step. You have the choice of three, four or five lives per game and each life can take three hits.

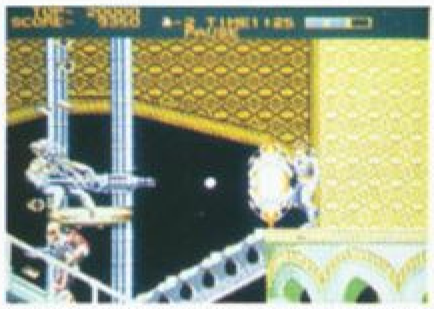
Your silicon persona is very agile and can crouch, run, leap, crawl and tumble. You can still look after yourself despite being armed with a mere sword. This weapon produces a super-fast beam of light which destroys almost everything in its path. Along the way, you can improve the range of this sword by powering-up on a pick-up. Other desirable things to collect include extra energy hit points, automatic weapons pods, electronic eagles and temporary invincibility. The walking weapons pods are useful little chaps who wander the entire screen (and just beyond the on-screen boundaries) taking out any enemies they meet. If you already have two pods on the go and pick up a third, you get a much stronger robotic panther. Though you must remember this robobeast is a little daft and will stand still while being blasted to bits.

Strider is split into five individual stages – each has different obstacles, monsters and backdrop visuals. You start the game flying a microlight glider into the Kremlin. Here you meet tall and small KBG soldiers wielding knife-edged assault rifles, a big Russian wrestler who revels in throwing you into walls, and finally the centipede-like Politburo armed with a giant hammer and sickle! The next level is also filled with surprises from a giant guy the gorilla made from steel to acrobatic but deadly kung-fu girls. Don't hold back because these are just simple precursors to the final stage where you get the chance to ride a dinosaur!

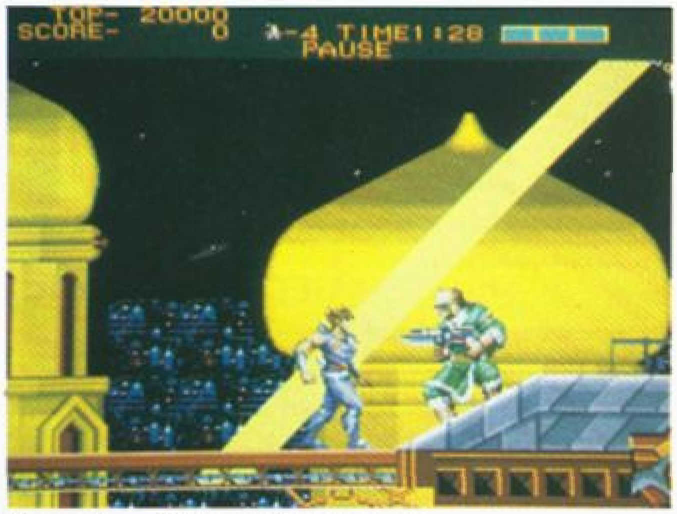
When it comes to graphics and sound presentation, this conversion really scores. Capcom's graphics designers have produced a beautiful example of their art. The noticeable amount of sprite glitch is the only graphics minus point. *Strider* has 32 exotic musictracks with titles such as Siberian Tunnel, Mass of Cloud, Gravity Unusual, Uroboros – The Iron Ruler and Mosque the Cold-Hearted. Every tune has that distinctive Japanese feel for FM synthesised sound. Sound effects comprise of 38 individual FX and eight sound samples of Japanese screams, speeches and sniggers.

This latest Capcom coin-op conversion is one of those 'must-have' games cartridges. Buy it, plug it in and shock your friends with the quality of not only this adaption but also your Megadrive. *Strider* is the best use of eight megabits this side of a Technotronic sound sample.

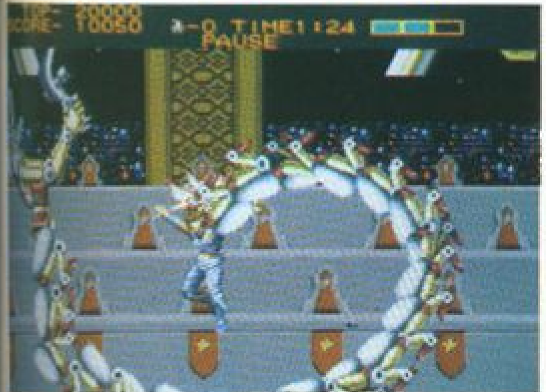
● **Rik Haynes**



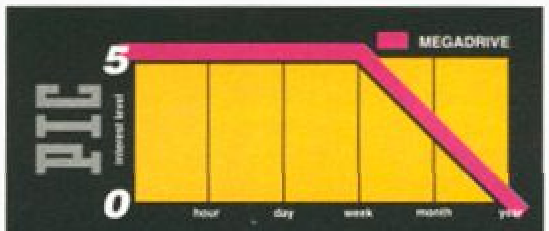
This meaty gun will soon make mincemeat of our hero. Hint: try to get as close to the baddie as possible when you jump down to this level because he can't take that many hits.



They say the neon lights are bright in the Kremlin.

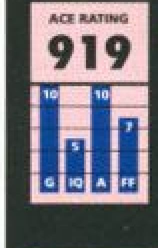


The Politburo has adopted a new political style... the armoured centipede party.



ACE RATING

919



MEGADRIVE

The individual audio-visual style of Strider leads you into its simple but highly addictive gameplay. Each of the five stages requires a different tactic to complete, so the game should last the first month-out in terms of constant play. This adaption of Strider even surpasses the high standards set by the Megadrive conversion of Golden Axe. If you want to play arcade-perfect conversions of the best coin-op's around, the Megadrive seems to be the machine of the moment. Roll-on G-Loc...

RELEASE DETAILS

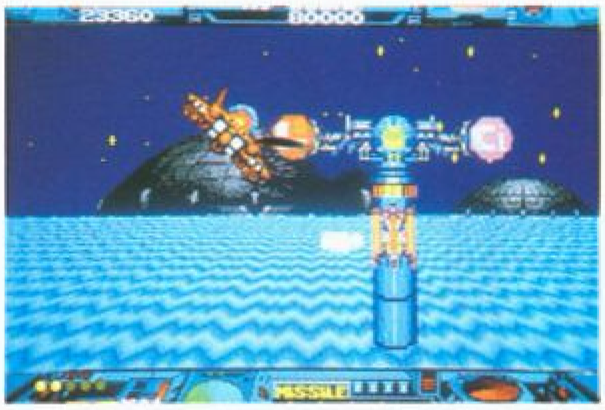
MEGADRIVE £40.00ct OUT NOW

Thanks to PC Engine Supplies (0782 712759) for supplying the cart.

BURNING FORCE

Has Namcot found tapped a new vein of excitement in the tried and tested 3D formula?

No they haven't. Burning Force despite some visually pleasing touches is really rather dull and doesn't even surpass Space Harrier 2, one of the first ever Megadrive titles.



Swooping to collect a laser weapon (bit of a bad choice actually - the lasers are useless).

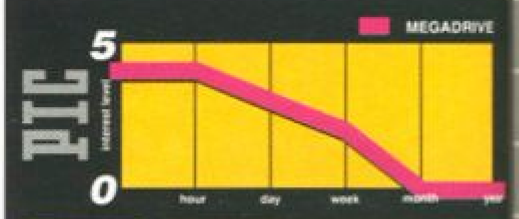
Screaming across the carpet-patterned plains aboard your jet-bike, you must (for the umpteenth time this month) do battle with the awesome forces of the alien scum-lord.

Originality? Nil point. Still, a "re-working" of a game we've all seen before isn't necessarily a bad thing. And Burning force does offer some nice touches.

For a start, there are some really terrific weapons to be had. By flying over large coloured balls, you'll collect the appropriate power-up. The missiles are the best. You start the game with rather spidery homing missiles but they can be beefed up into whopper spinning green spheres which cycle around, inflicting massive hit points on anything in its wake.

The bad guys basically consist of three types. There are formations of flying horrors which swoop on from the sides. There are bigger aliens which drift out of the screen towards you and there are stationary towers which fire missiles at you.

At the end of each stage, surprise surprise, a massive beastie swirls around and using the top secret information passed on by some Space Corps general, you must zonk it.



ACE RATING

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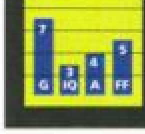


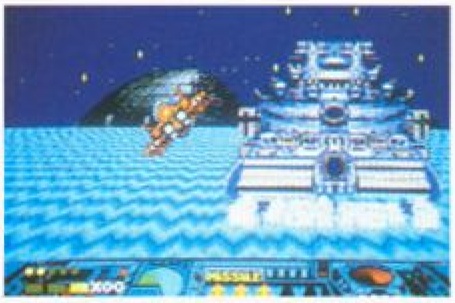
SEGA MEGA DRIVE

All the super presentation and lovely bonus screens in the world can't disguise the fact that this is a rather tired old formula blast. Fans of the Space Harrier genre who simply can't get enough may find some excuse to buy, but true Harrier-o-philes should be happier sticking with the original

The difficulty level can be set to easy or hard (nice to see lots of gradation here) and the number of lives can be incremented to a maximum five. Reasonable information. Shame we've see it all before.

● Jim Dougl

This game was kindly supplied for review by PC Engine Supplies

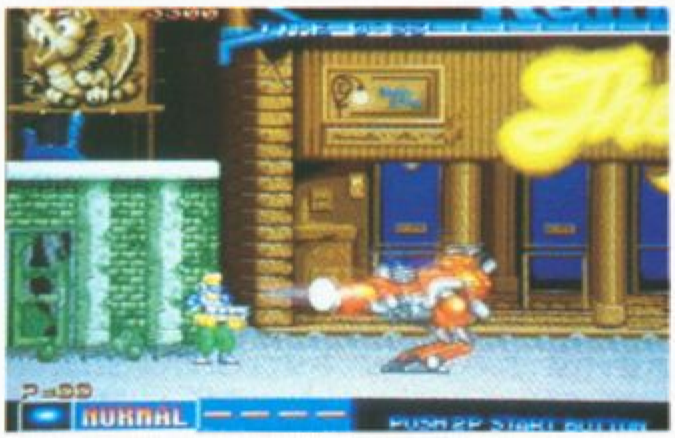


Head to Head with the first end-of-level bad guy. A few rockets up the exhaust-ports will do the job.

CYBER-LIP

The NEO-GEO goes 'droid hunting

Mankind is under threat from alien forces, and so scientists have designed a series of powerful combat 'droids, controlled by a huge central computer, and sited them on an outlying colony world. As usual, the techies can get nothing right, and before you can say "What on Earth does 'Cyber-lip' mean?" the computer has gone berserk and the droids are running amok.



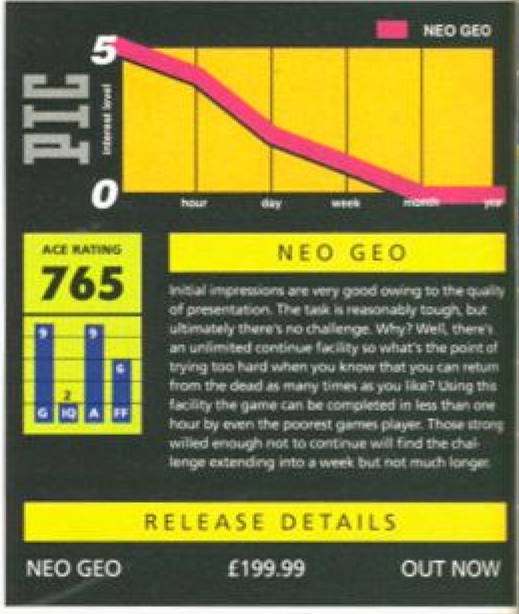
This bouncin' 'bot causes no end of headaches - especially when he shoots you in the bonce!

The game is basically a forced scroll shoot-'em-up, with you controlling a well-armed beefy hunk who can run left, right, jump, crouch, cling to the ceiling and, of course, shoot. The rampaging robots attack from all directions, and you must waste them as best you can. Some 'droids leave behind bonus weaponry when killed, such as grenades, flame throwers and missiles, which can be toggled between to select the one best suited to offing your current opponent.

Along the way there are buildings and rooms to enter where you can replenish your limited ammunition supplies. At the end of each level is a now de rigeur huge guardian, which must be pumped full of lead until it gives up the ghost, and allows you access to the lift shaft and the lower levels of the complex, taking you nearer to your final encounter with the haywire computer.

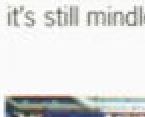
The parallaxed backgrounds scroll smoothly in every direction, and the screen is constantly swarming with enemy sprites. Digitised speech messages and warnings are shouted at you throughout the game. Technically it can't be faulted. The gameplay? Well, it may be totally unoriginal but it's still mindlessly enjoyable.

● David Upchurc



ACE RATING

765

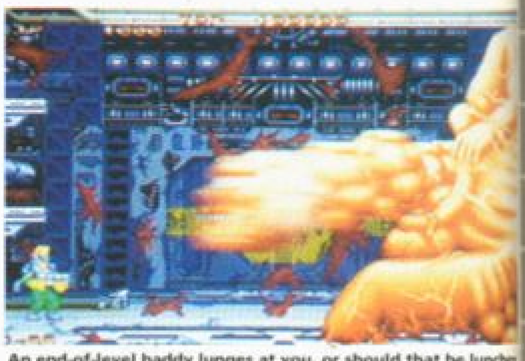


NEO GEO

Initial impressions are very good owing to the quality of presentation. The task is reasonably tough, but ultimately there's no challenge. Why? Well, there's an unlimited continue facility so what's the point of trying too hard when you know that you can return from the dead as many times as you like? Using this facility the game can be completed in less than one hour by even the poorest games player. Those strong willed enough not to continue will find the challenge extending into a week but not much longer.

RELEASE DETAILS

NEO GEO £199.99 OUT NOW



An end-of-level baddy lunges at you, or should that be lunche on you?

DRIVE

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DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR SLOT THESE INTO YOUR

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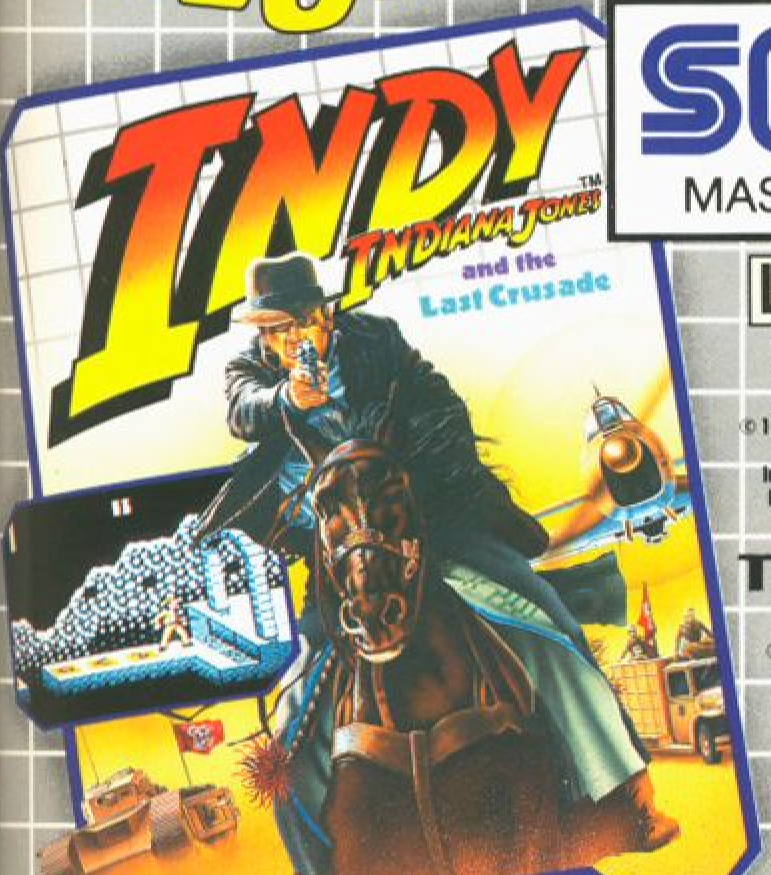
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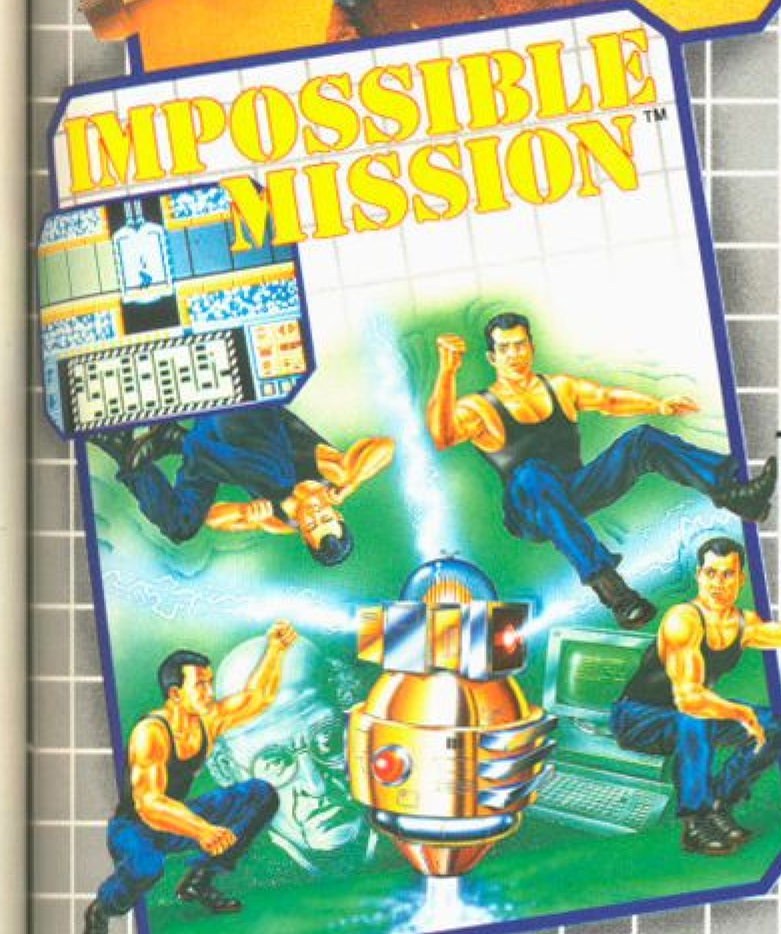
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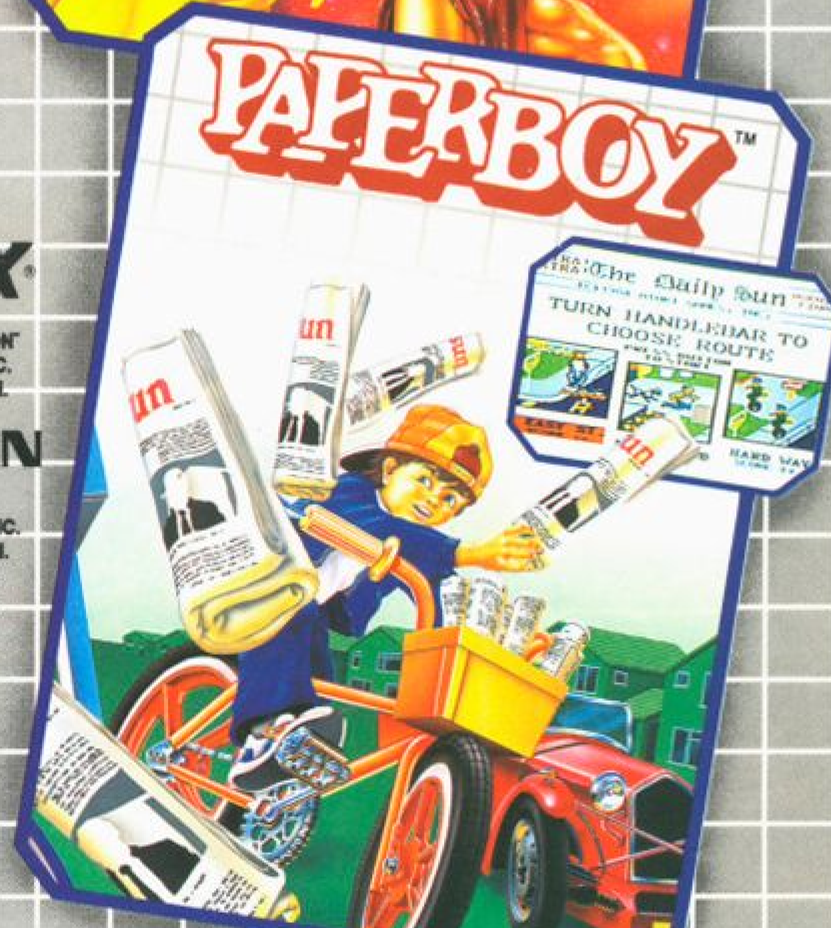
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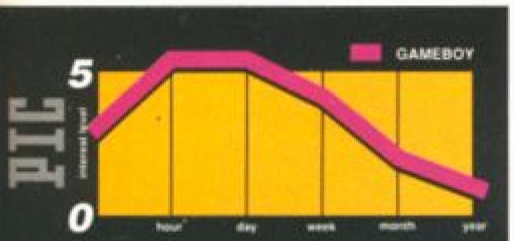
PIPE DREAM

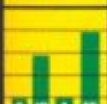
Go with the flow on your Gameboy



Pipe Dream has immediately become one of my favourite Gameboy titles. It has that additive un-put-downable quality, and it's got it bad. The game will appeal to anybody who can produce logical plumbing works under pressure. Do you think you could pull a stroke of creative pipe genius just as the flooz is about to ooze? There's only one way to find out.

ACE RATING

910



GAMEBOY

Essentially the same as the other versions, Gameboy *Pipe Dream* includes a few minor modifications, most noticeably the absence of the bonus games (which have been replaced by rather tedious interlude animations which you can't skip), you can't see the piece under your 'cursor' and, most irritatingly, you have to reenter the password every-time you play the game. However, you can link-two Gameboy's for simultaneous plumbing with a friend.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY	$29.99	OUT NOW

A slimy green liquid called 'flooz' is about to invade your Gameboy unless you can reroute its journey through some fancy pipe construction in yet another simple, but infuriatingly addictive, arcade puzzle game just waiting to soak up every second of your leisure time.

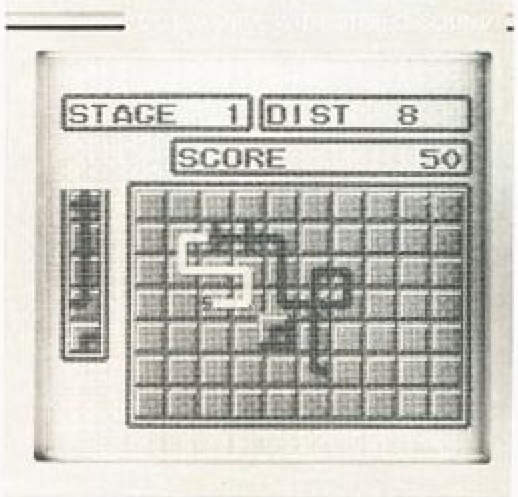
The construction site is divided into a 10x7 square arena. Each square can hold a single section of pipe and it's your job to construct a pipeline for the flooz to flow through. The available selection of pipe pieces automatically scrolls into view on the left of the screen. These pipes are basically divided into corner, across, down and crossover sections.

You simply place the current pipe piece onto the grid to create some pipeworks. If you can produce looping pipelines you get bonus points. Mistakes can be rectified - at the cost of points and crucial time. A distance counter acts as a time limit, if the flooz is still flowing by the time it reaches zero you can move onto the next stage. *Pipe Dream* is divided into 36 stages.

On later stages in the game you start getting obstacles which cannot be destroyed, reservoirs which slow the flooz down and pipe pieces with directional arrows (the flooz can't flow against the direction shown).

Pipe Dream is the sort of game that can ruin personal relationships. Excuse me while I just have one more go.

● **Rik Haynes**

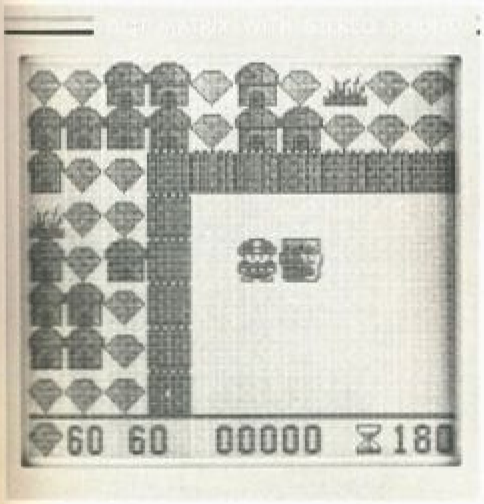


Lay that pipe quickly or you'll be down the tubes yourself!!

FLOOZ FACTS *Pipe Dream*, called *Pipe Mania* is Europe, was written on the Gameboy by Bullet-Proof Software - the same guys who brought us the Gameboy conversion of *Tetris*. The Assembly Line provided the original game design, with Entertainment International and Lucasfilm Games adding their own gameplay and presentation ideas. Many thanks to EI's Ian Higgins for lending me his personal copy of Gameboy *Pipe Dream*... just don't expect it back, Ian!

BOULDERDASH

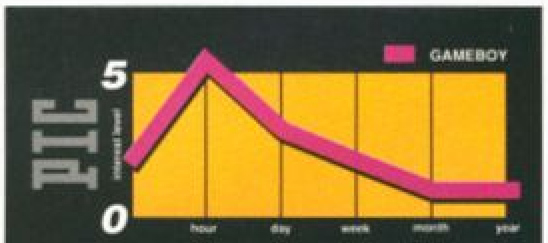
VICTOR MUSICAL INDUSTRIES produces a goldmine of a Gameboy release



The graphics may lack the size and colour of their home computer cousins, but that all-important gameplay transfers without a glitch.

Rockford, the cute character from First Star Software's classic C64 game *Boulderdash*, has resurfaced on the Gameboy thanks to a leading Japanese console company. But does he look good in monochrome?

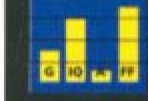
You control Rockford as he mines diamonds from a four-way scrolling maze of caves, arctic wastelands, jungles and underwater before a time limit expires. While digging a path though the ground, certain obstructions, such as walls, stop you in your tracks. Digging round a boulder will make it fall down. If you happen to be in the way of any tumbling boulders or diamonds you lose a life. As you progress through the game you encounter nasty butterflies (?) who follow you around trying to kill you with their lethal touch and amoebas who can be both a help and a hindrance.



You won't be able to put the game down after 15 minutes of play. Like *Tetris* and *Pipe Dream*, *Boulderdash* is a must-have for fans of the arcade puzzle game. Nobody has managed to surpass the *Boulderdash* way of things in the game's six years of existence. People looking for addictive gameplay and a lasting challenge should go for *Boulderdash* in a big way. Games like this put the class in classic.

ACE RATING

908



GAMEBOY

You won't buy *Boulderdash* for its looks or sounds; the gameplay counts for everything in *Boulderdash*. Beam Software, the veteran Australian games software developer, has only fiddled with a few features from the original. The new wide-view option of the surrounding area is useful. I miss the weird title tune from the C64 and Atari versions - you win some, you lose some!

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY	3400 Yen	OUT NOW

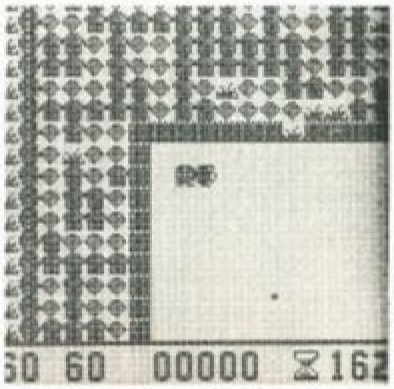
This version has been split into four separate areas: the original caverns, arctic, jungle and underwater.

This change has been for a pure aesthetic reason because every object and character performs the same function no matter what their shape or form.

Instead of boring boulders you get penguins, huts, Easter Island statues and snapping jaws.

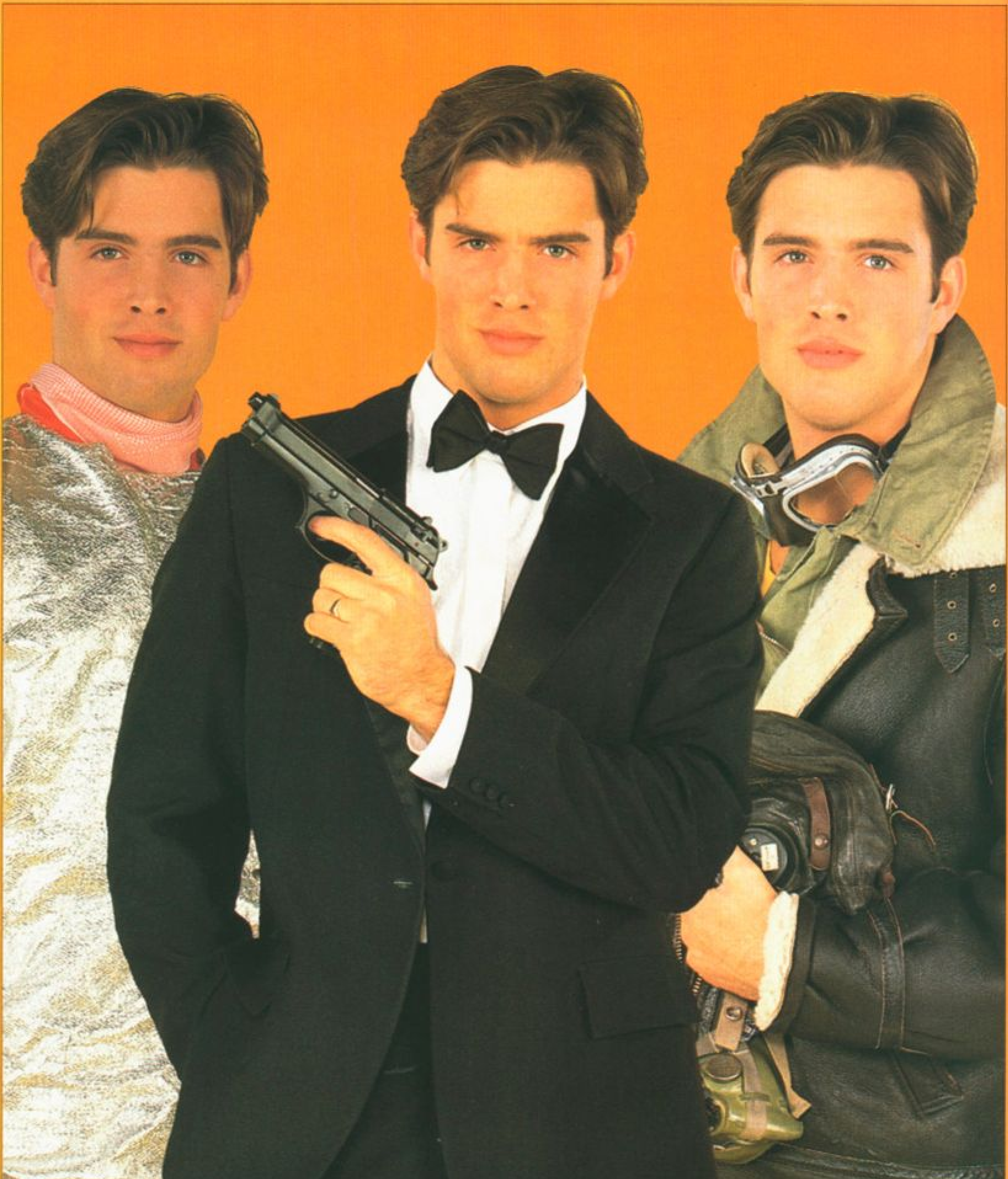
Gameboy Rockford is slightly faster than his C64 cousin which is handy for getting you out of tight spots. The game is packed with features including five difficulty levels and a two-player link-up option

● **Rik Haynes**



Dodge the boulders and find the diamonds - so simple, it's beautiful!

The problem with life is



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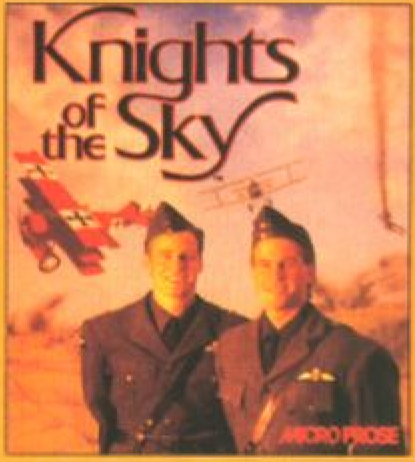
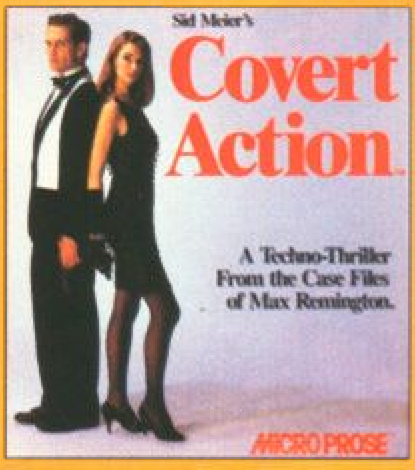


THE PRESENT

The 1990's are the age of international crime, terrorism and espionage - and you are the clandestine superspy charged with travelling the globe to combat these forces in MicroProse's new techno-thriller, "Covert Action". Using the latest electronic bugging techniques, high tech intelligence sources and good old fashioned clue hunting, its up to you to identify the ringleaders and bring them to justice. Become expert in wiretapping, decipher acquired information with the aid of sophisticated code-breaking programs, and use surveillance to complete the picture. And if your technological know-how, cunning and luck ever let you down, you've always got the latest combat weapons such as CS gas, stun grenades and compact sub-machine guns to help you out. Across Europe, the Middle East and Central America, with 16 cities to cover in each area, you'll have your work cut out to make sense of the allegiances between numerous terrorist groups, known political activists and foreign spies, all undertaking "Covert Action". Available for IBM PC compatible computers.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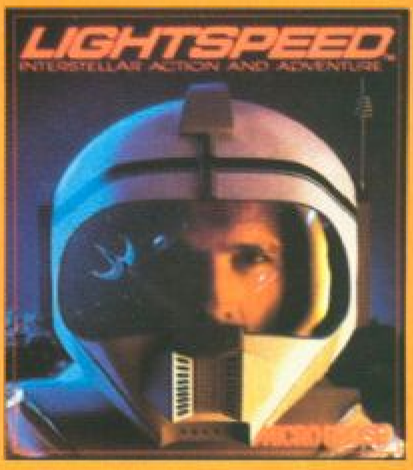

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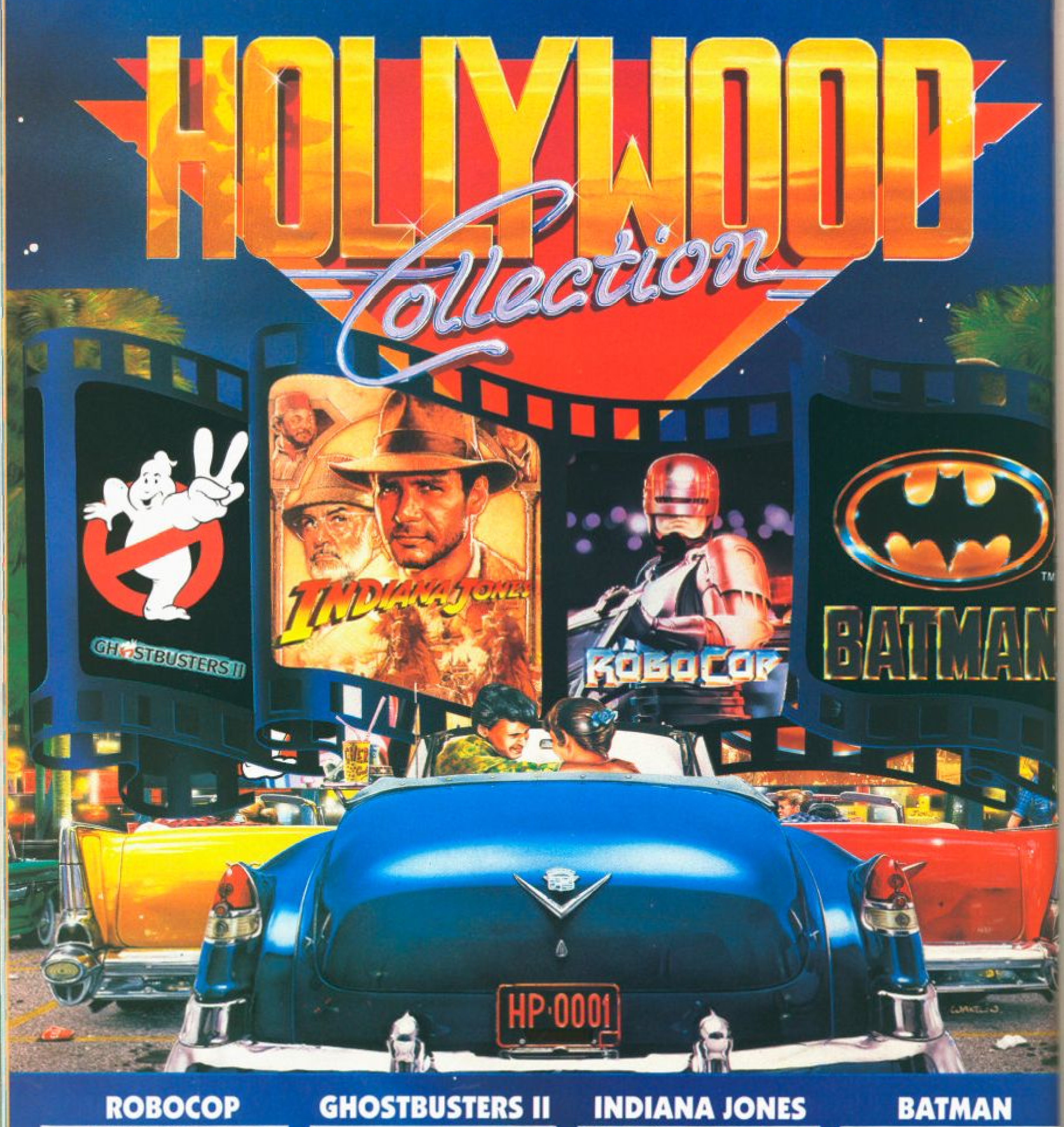
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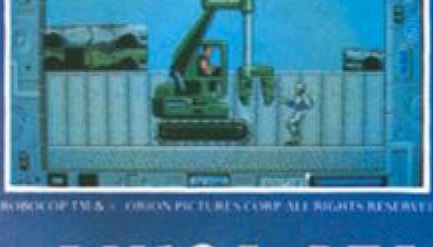
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CD Future

An American company have launched a compact CD full motion video system that points the way to the future of home computing. Here's the exclusive ACE story...

Everyone's agreed that CD technology is going to make a massive impact on games technology and home computing, but actual CD units are pretty thin on the ground. Commodore's CDTV has now been put off till the Spring (at least in the UK) and the other main contender, Philips/Sony's CD-I, isn't going to be available until autumn 1991 at the earliest.

One of the problems – as most ACE readers will know – is that, for better or for worse, many CD experts feel that FMV (full frame, full motion video) is an essential specification for the system's that will dominate the home for the next ten years. You can find out more about this our Intertainment feature on pages 29-31 of this issue. However, there has been for some time a working FMV system available to manufacturers – Intel's DVI chip set, designed to give FMV in conjunction with a CD equipped PC.

Until now, DVI has been an expensive curiosity but it's now emerged in a revolutionary new package that really shows how CD technology could revolutionise home computing.

TADPOLE POSITION

Empruve's Cornucopia is a compact workstation for home and business that has several highly original design features. Dominating the package is an A4 aspect ratio monochrome display accompanied by a 4" colour LCD.

This means you get the advantages of colour and a very high resolution display (together with fast screen handling) simultaneously. The 4" screen can either display an independent image or can show colour highlights from the mono display.

The innovation doesn't stop there, however. You also get a special joystick type controller (the 'Tadpole') that features three buttons and an analogue stick. The monitor is mounted on a swivel enabling you to use the system either in upright (small footprint) desktop mode, in 'book' orientation, or horizontally to give you a landscape format display. There's also a sampling feature that allows you to add 'voice' notes during use.

Another neat feature is the control panel. Most multimedia systems clutter up the screen with icons, but Empruve have made these a hardware feature ranged alongside the monitor. Program developers get fifteen icon panels that are completely reconfigurable in software. Each icon has been carefully chosen and together the options are pretty comprehensive.

The first five icons have obviously been included with hypermedia applications in mind. Called Key, Door, Room, Shelf, and Content they present a control metaphor for exploring databases or interactive hypermedia packages. Using DVI, these packages can combine video, audio, illustrations, and program routines. There's even a hardware 'bookmark' icon that enables you to leave up to 50 tags in a database for instant retrieval.

CD's obviously have good audio capabilities, so the Cornucopia boasts sophisticated stereo audio circuitry with twin loudspeakers mounted on either side of the monitor together with a headphone socket. Add an optional keyboard and you can use the machine as a conventional PC with VGA graphics and CD ROM capability. Add a tuner and you've got a TV.

Software for the Empruve should start appearing in early 1991 – at the moment the system is being considered by encyclopaedia publishers as a possible 'electronic book' version of their products. When the system is made publicly available, it should cost between £2000 and £2500.

It's only a matter of time, however, for the Cornucopia concept to reach down into the more affordable home market. Meanwhile, the design of this machine should serve as an inspiration for other hardware manufacturers – the future of multimedia must not be confined to hardwiring different media platforms together into complex spaghetti junctions. What's needed are more units like this, where audio, video, and interactivity are properly integrated into one system. Well done, Empruve.

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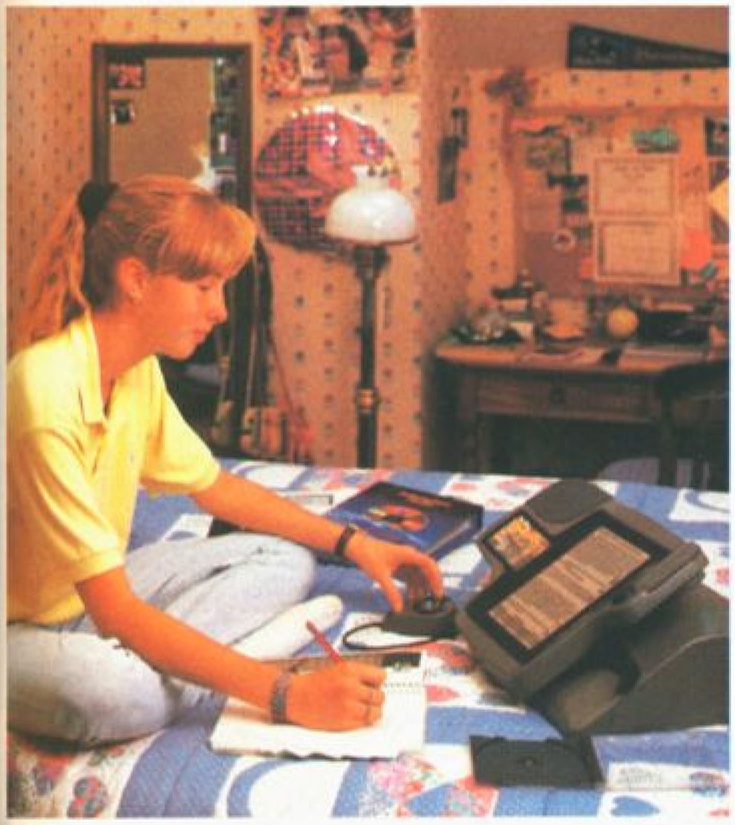
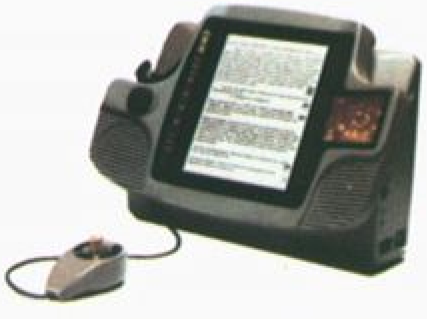
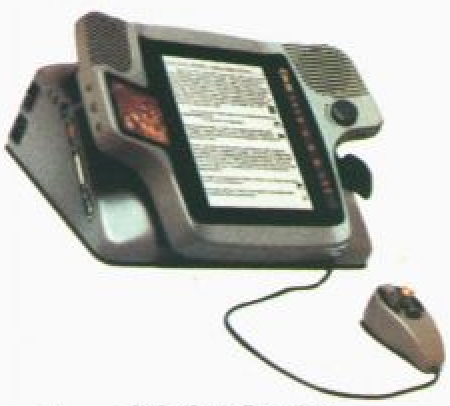


The Cornucopia in action – but at £2000 it's going to be a bit pricey for the bedroom



The unit in 'monitor' orientation and...



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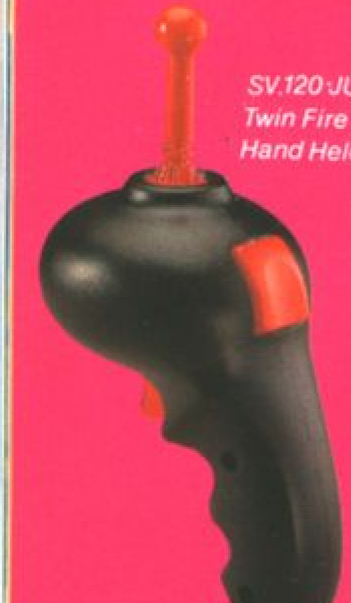

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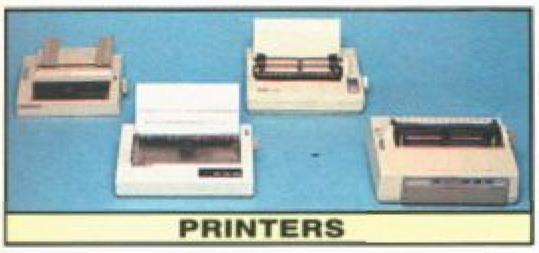
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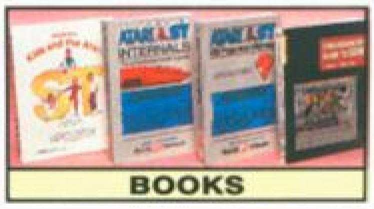
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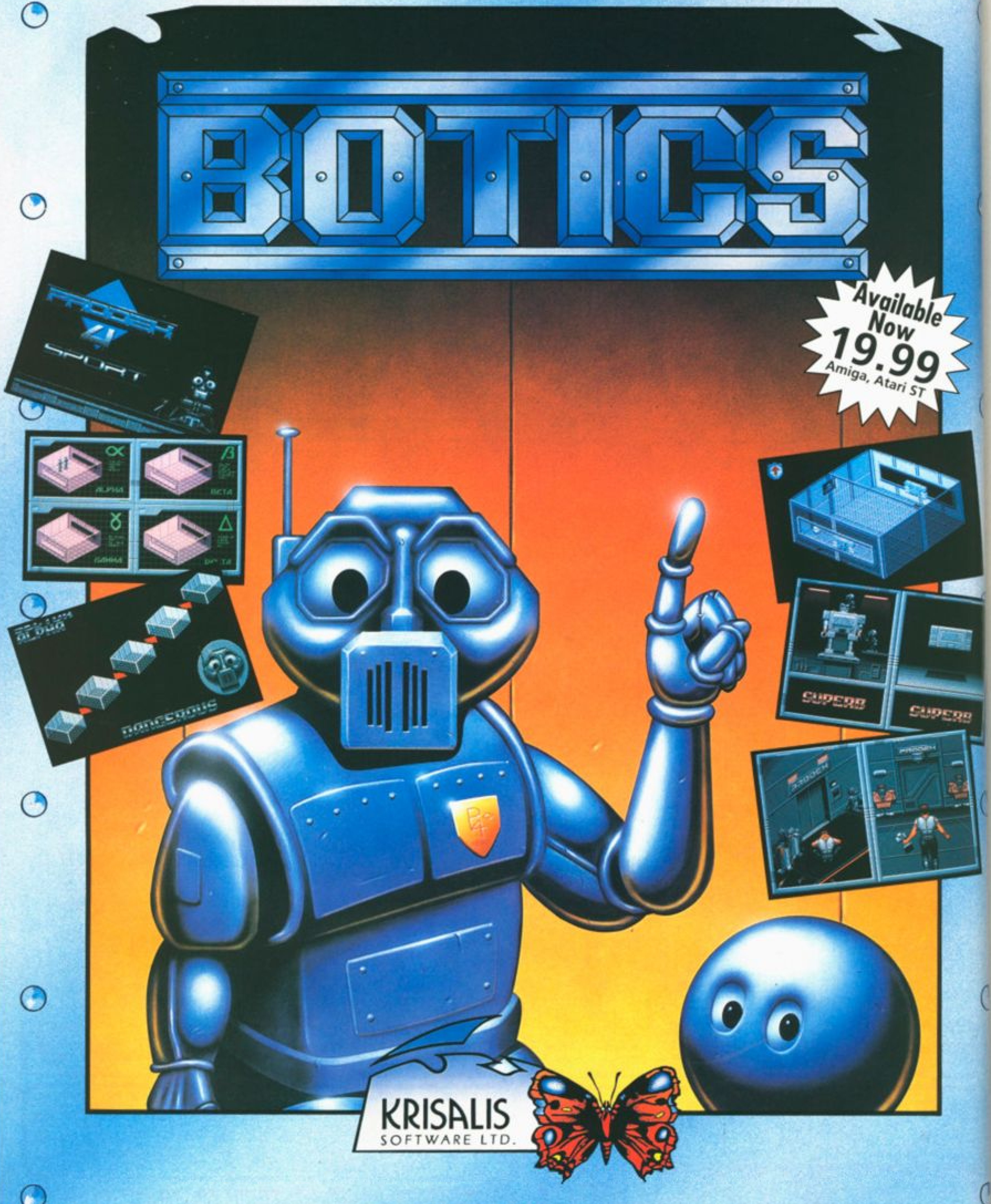
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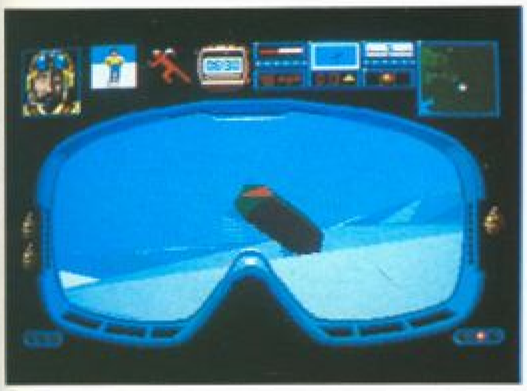
UPDATES

Latest conversions this month for PC,Spectrum, CBM 64



Midwinter on the PC

PC

MIDWINTER
Rainbird £29.99; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 32; ACE rating 948

In the post-apocalyptic winter which has engulfed the world after a meteor strike, civilisation is protected by a small party which has colonised what were the Azores. With the aid of available technology and transport, and a security force, the FVPF, they must protect themselves from the attacks of hostile forces and environmental threats.

Midwinter is a big game concept, and the accompanying background booklet is thick and detailed. You control up to 32 interacting characters, using a wealth of option screens to select parameters and functions. Midwinter features excellent solid-3D animations, either from your viewpoint as you ski around the island, or from the cockpit of various land and air vehicles.

The training options have been expanded on the PC to include practice on different vehicles. Gameplay is complex and absorbing, and the combination of action and strategy ideal for the dedicated gamer rather than for the fan of a quick blast.

The colourful VGA graphics are on a par with those of the Atari ST, the EGA graphics almost are, and animation is smooth and swift. There's very little disk-swapping even if you're running from floppies. Sound too is well implemented, with AdLib and MT-32 supported. A top-class conversion of an excellent title.

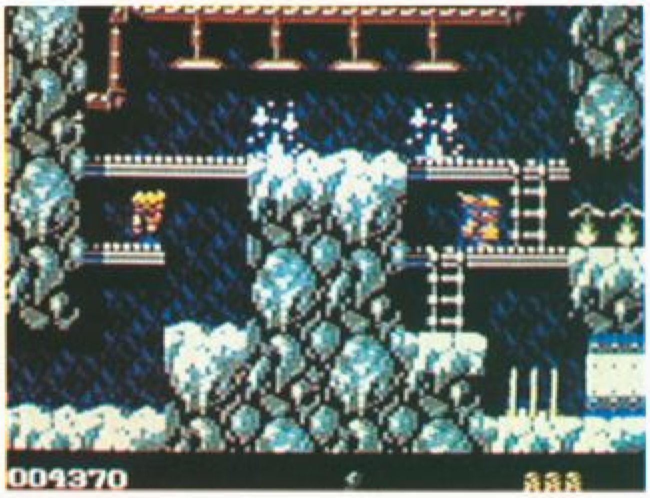
PC RATING: 950

CBM 64

RICK DANGEROUS 2
Microstyle £9.95; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 38; ACE Rating 870

It's been argued that the Commodore 64 is better suited to this sort of platforms-and-ladders action than some 16-bit machines, and true enough Rick Dangerous 2 look really good on the 64. The sprites are colourful and well-defined, the scrolling multidirectional, the animation smooth and fast, and the control extremely precise and accurate.

Gameplay is almost identical to that of other versions; the way in which Rick jumps towards you out of the screen, bawling his little head off as he falls to his doom is particularly amusing. Music and sound effects are top class, but the tape loading system is very long-winded and a disk version is recommended if practical.



Rick Danagerous on the CBM 64

C64 RATING: 889

CPC 64

BUCK ROGERS: COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY
S.S.I. £24.99; Amiga version reviewed issue 39; ACE rating 885

Sci-fi hero Buck Rogers has survived through comic strips, 30's film serials, comics, and even a dreadful TV series; in his latest incarnation he's a TSR role-playing game character, and SSI's game is closely based on the scenario and gameplay of the RPG.

Frozen in the 21st century and thawed in the post-apocalyptic 25th, Rogers finds himself caught up in the battle between the evil conglomerate RAM and the Earth forces of Neo.

The game comes complete with a paperback, First Power Play, an instruction manual and a Log Book giving RPG-style character attribute tables, weapons modifiers, species information and floorplans.

The C64 version is supplied on three disks, which can be freely backed up. The game itself has an enormous amount of variety; after defining and modifying your characters, which you will need to save to a blank disk, you go through an introductory routine explaining the plot and objectives, then you're plunged into an attack scenario.

The gameplay alternates between movement sections (with small 3-D pictures of the surrounding area), information displays, and combat routines with portraits of your enemies and animated fighting. Control is by keyboard or joystick, using menu options at the bottom of the screen.

As with many RPG's, though there are some excellent pictures, graphics and sound take second place to atmosphere and background, of which there are plenty. The C64 version is understandably slower than 16-bit version, but retains the complexity and engaging detail.

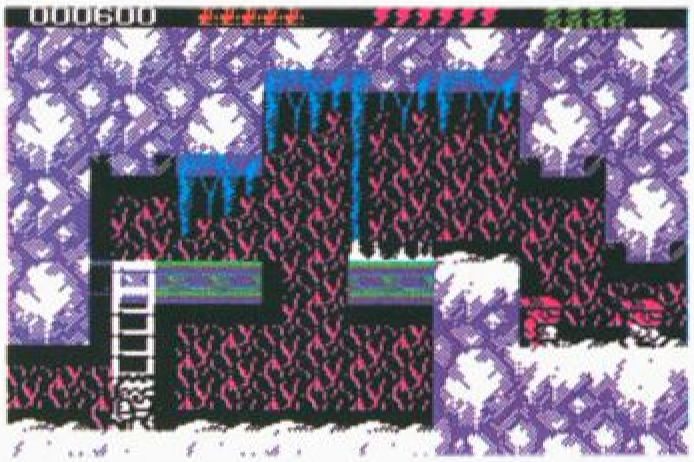
C64 RATING: 875A

SPECTRUM

RICK DANGEROUS 2
Microstyle £9.95; Atari ST version reviewed Issue 38; ACE Rating 870

The difficulty with platform games on the Spectrum is that if you use too much colour, attribute clashes make it difficult to judge your position. Rick Dangerous 2 manages to make good use of colour in the backgrounds, but keeps the main character monochrome to minimise these problems.

The screens on the Spectrum version are flip-scrolling, but the action is very much the same as other versions, with all the platforms, ladders, lightning bolts, roving aliens, deathtraps, obstacles and pitfalls you could expect. Sound is fair, and overall, though Rick 2 doesn't set any new standards, it's a well-above average Spectrum title.



Rick Dangerous 2 on the Spectrum

SPECTRUM RATING: 850

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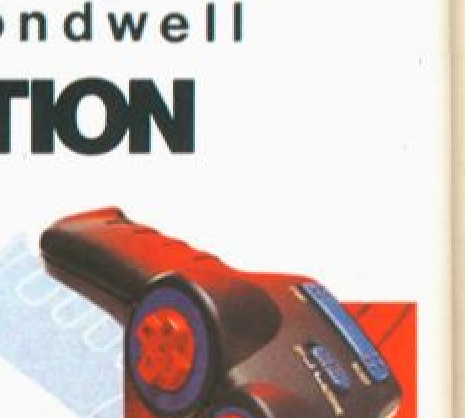

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CAPTIVE

How many phone calls? Are you lot finding *Captive* tough or what? Well, now help is at hand thanks to the super chaps at Mindscape who have kindly put together a Level 0 tipsheet for us. So let's get on with it.

Each of the ten bases which must be destroyed in order to escape your galactic prison has it's own distinct design and layout. Each is populated by an individual selection of aliens. Before you can enter a base, you'll have to find your way "across country" from the landing site to the base entrance.

The first level is actually fairly simple once you've mastered the operational functions of the droids and the Brief Case Computer. It involves 10 small to medium sized bases and a relatively easy space station to rescue yourself from. A normal player should complete level 0 after a couple of weeks.

You have to land on the planet Butre (008W 072N). Zoom in on the planet and click on the large white dot. Click on **ORBIT** and The Swan (the droids' ship) will make its way across space and orbit Butre. While the ship is en route, it's a good idea to initialise your droids.

Click with the right button on the droid's **STATUS** icon to bring up the back pack. Click on the computer chip with the left button and deposit it on the droid's brain (left side of droid's head). This will initialise the naming system where the player can type in a name for the droid. The name acts as a personality generator that creates the droid's wisdom, dexterity and vitality stats.

Repeat the above for all four droids and you'll have the team ready for action.

By this time The Swan should have arrived. Click with the right button to bring up the main view again. Click again on the landing sight to program the drop destination and then click on the **LAND** icon to start the drop.

Once the lander has landed you will see a picture of the first level's planet. Have a wander around the world and get used to the control system before attempting to enter the base. Don't walk into the water because it's highly toxic.

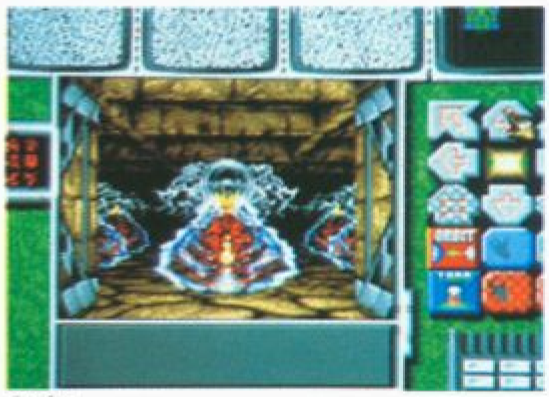
To enter the first base: walk up to the door and pick up the clipboard found near by (use the left mouse button on the object in the main view to put it in the player's hand). Holding it in the hand will allow you to read it on the info screen. This will show the combination of buttons to press in order to open the door.

Once open go inside and you will now be in the base itself. Pick up the explosives and the clipboard. Walk to the far end of the air-lock and use the **PUSH** control to move the wall and get into the first area of the base. (**PUSH** is achieved by pressing the RIGHT mouse button on the **FORWARD** icon).

There are many ways of completing the game. Here's one way of attacking the problems. You will find a style suited to your skills and it may well be different but will achieve the same results.

You'll find new areas of the base to explore once you identify which walls push and which don't. Look out for the ones with rollers at the bottom.

- Explore the level completely, examine every nook and cranny and open up every cupboard you can find.


Captive

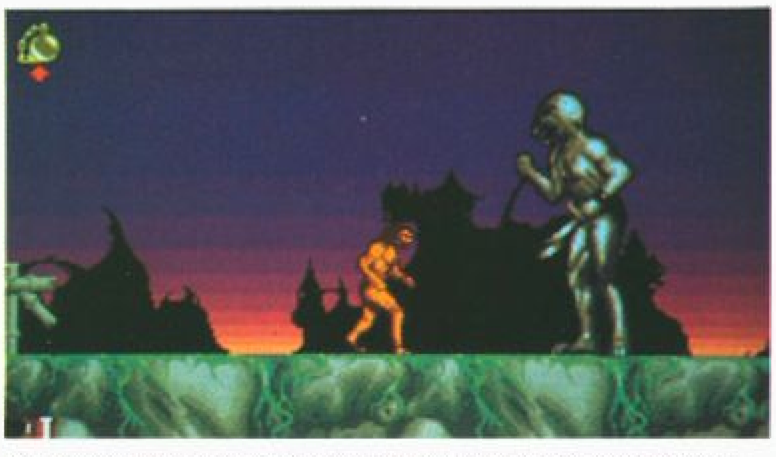
- Collect all the gold you can find dropped by the dead aliens. Use this in the shops to buy, sell and repair objects. If you've damaged an item of the droid's body, repair it at the shops.

- For the first base it's a good idea to concentrate on increasing your brawling skills only. This makes you a fabulous puncher and is sufficient for the enemies that you will encounter. If you must buy a weapon, then we recommend the ball. It's reusable and fun!

- Devices are plugged into the droids and give a read out on the monitor at the top of the screen. A good device to get on this base is the route-finder. This is only available from one shop so you might have to search for it. It's classified as an "optic". There are seven types of optic device. Buy with trial and error until you find the route finder. If you buy the wrong one you can always sell it back for no loss.

- The shops in a base operate a co-operative banking system. This allows the player to leave any gold he collects at one shop, and the funds will be available at any other. However, remember to retrieve the money before you blow the base, otherwise you'll be somewhat out of pocket.

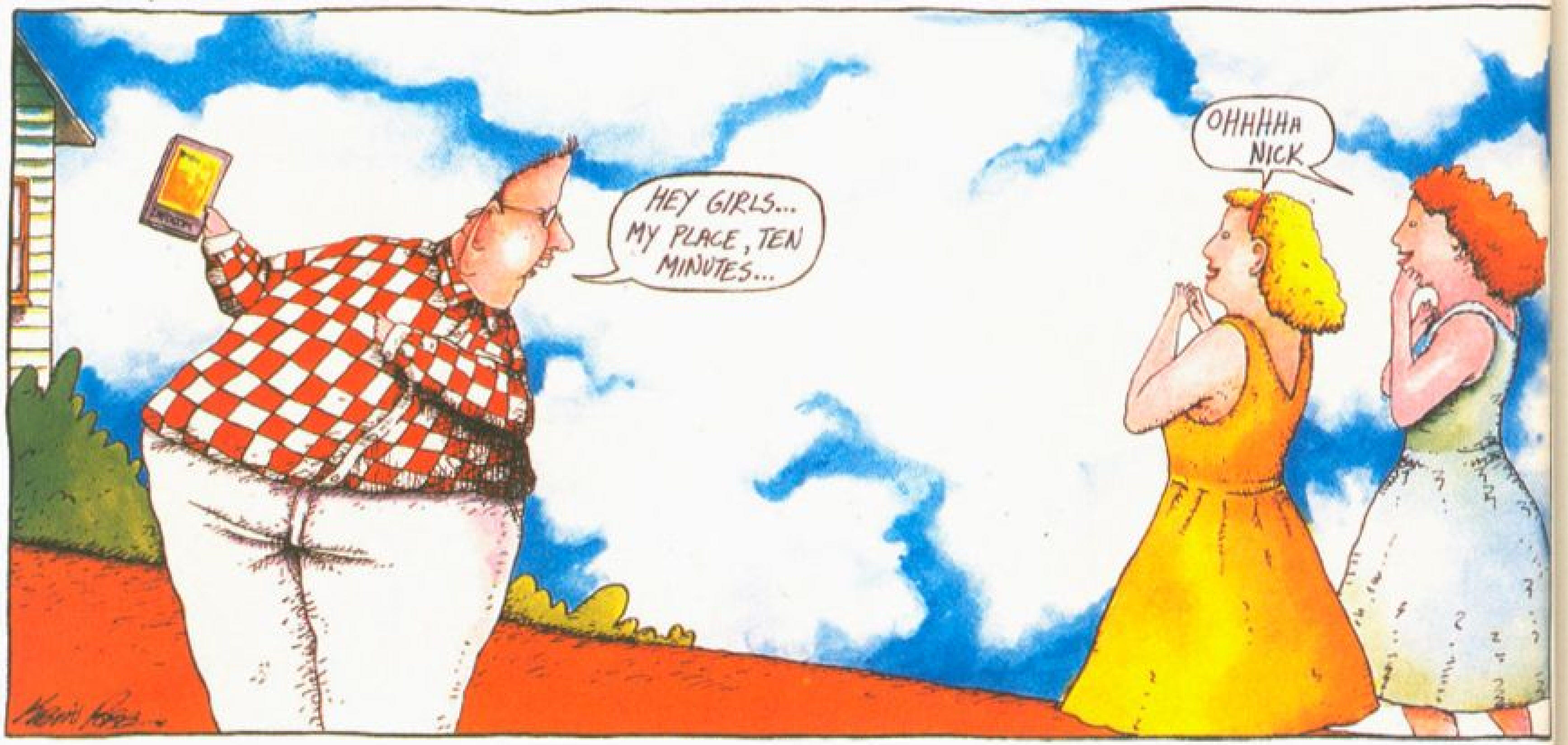
- Find the professor in the computer room for the clue to the next planet's location. Kill him for the password into the computer. Click on the computer to activate it. Type in the password to reveal the planet probe. Collect this (it weighs a lot, so select the carrying droid carefully) and you're ready for the destruction of the base.


Mmmm....nice. The Quest for Tears has been on hold for some time but it's back with a bang. Here, a lovely selection of garments from the fantasy collection, sported by your

CAPTIVE CLUES

Collect all gold dropped by the dead aliens.
- Open every cupboard, they were put there for a reason.
- Find the computer.
- If the password is not accepted by the computer, there will be another.
- Doors will not function when generators are blown, so keep them open.
- Powerpoints run dry when generators are blown so get power first.
- Make sure you're well armed, fixed and fully powered before you leave the base. You may not find a weapon shop for some time.
- Use powerpoints as a weapon.
- Players with higher dexterity hit harder and better.
- Players with higher vitality dodge hits better.
- Players with higher wisdom gain more experience.
- Map well.
- Initiate all droid chips.
- Never leave a base without a planet probe.
- Throwing heavier objects will inflict more injury, although there will be some objects too heavy to lift.
- Remember to go up skills (very important in the early levels as skills are gained fast).
- Save your game often, and be sure to number each one differently. You may do something silly like lock yourself in.
- The green air lock will not let you out until the generators have been destroyed.
- Avoid using tindron heads.
- Don't just stand there in a battle, keep on the move. Use the keypad for faster movement.
- Make notes of what each shop sells. This is very imporant is you are to save money.
- A left side attack will only attack aliens on the left, whereas the back party will attack down.the middle, left and right.
- Put your leader at the back. This means there is less chance of his head being knocked off (!).
- Use doors to squash aliens.
- Don't ever get caught under a raiser wall.

Nick never got any chicks, until he bought those Infocom from Mastertronic GAMES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MY PLACE, TEN
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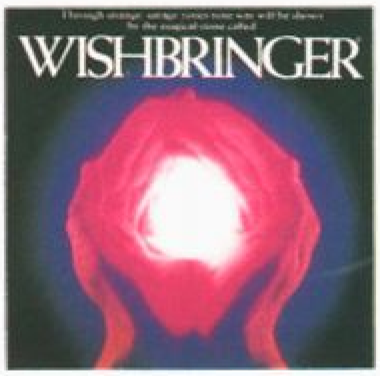
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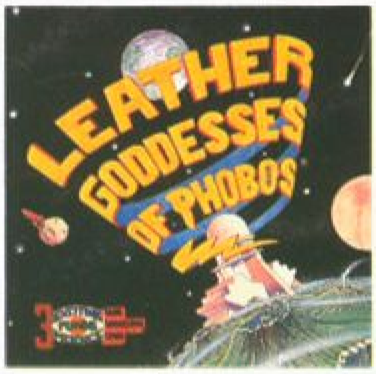
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- The first level is pretty easy. It's best used as a training ground. Kill anything that moves to gain experience. Make sure you spend this experience on the skills for each droid. Use money to buy devices and ball weapons. Mines are good to use as well. Use money also to repair any damaged body parts.

- Once you have explored all of the first base, go back to the generators and blow them all up. After a short pause they will start to explode, now run like hell! Us the route finder to get back to the door. Click on the door to get into the lobby. Use the same combination as before to get out safely but don't hand around because the base is exploding around you!

- Once outside, go back to the ship and press UP to board. You can then orbit the planet and go back into space. Put the planet probe on the planet map and watch it go to the next base. Land there and continue. Good luck.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2

Alright! Enough is enough. Even with the help of last month's tip, you folks just don't seem to be able to make any headway with Psygnosis' graphic romp. So for the first and last time... THE WHOLE SOLUTION! Special thanks to Russell Lazzari and Philip Baxter for this.

Start the game and go left through the trees and towards the bridge (now loads). When at the bridge, wait at the edge until the highest fish comes from the left and jump onto the bridge and keep jumping until off the other side. Do not kill the person being held by the beam but kill the guy holding him.Ask the person who you save about "traps" and he will tell you which switch to push. Then fall into the hole to the left. Walk left and turn around and kill the bats. Do the same for each step down. Go to the bottom of the rope and jump left. Don't fall in the acid. When a person firing at you appears then duck down and keep on shooting until he falls off the edge. And do thesame for the next person.

Collect the energy bottle and use it if necessary. Enter the house and go left up the stairs and collect the ale. Go out of the house and go back to where you started from. This time there are no people or bats. Continue going right until you meet the pygmies. Jump towards them over the spears they throw and kill them.

Do the same for the others until you get to a log floor where a pygmy is flying above you. When he moves to each corner jump up and hit him with your weapon, now do as before with the other pygmies. Keep going right until you find a rope. Jump onto the level above next to the rope and keep on jumping onto each level going leftwards.

When level with an enemy go left until you are behind the chest of coins and kill the enemy. Collect the coins and the axe he leaves behind. Jump onto a short rope hanging from above. Keep on jumping up until you're next to a solid lump of slime. Shoot the slime and go right and collect the coins and the energy bottle. Go back down to the ground level and left until under a short level. Underneath there's a hole with twigs on top. Jump and fall through the hole. Go down.

Go to the edge of the floor next to the water. Jump across and fire at the same time to shoot crystals which appear from the water. Press the relevant function key for axes and walk over the bridge. A man will run away. Follow him until you get onto the steel drawbridge and jump up to kill the drawbridge winder in the top left corner (NOT the two people above you). Go back along the drawbridge and kill the last man. Shoot the stone door until it crumbles away. Go left and jump onto the light and up again until you see a sign saying "Spikes" (to the right next to the light).

Climb the light and shoot the switch next to the sign and quickly run to the left until you come to a sort of house area. Shoot left and hit the switch. Run back before the time runs out. Never stay at the other end. As you have only 3 seconds, this may take several attempts. Run back and down one level, then go left and fall onto the chain holding up the lights for the four men sitting below. Fall off the rope between the four men and shoot each one.

Go right and collect the key. Go back and jump onto the chain again (don't shoot the guards coming towards you) and wait until the guards are below you. Jump to the left past the guards and under the cage which falls onto you. You can now do nothing until you are in jail. Phew! That should be enough to keep you going. More *Beast* next time!

OP STEALTH

Sweat trickled from his brow... it was hot... too damn hot. Tension high, nerves tingling. He could feel the hairs tap dancing across the back of his neck. Only one thing for it... he'd have to read the third instalment of Delphine's Operation Stealth solution.

Struggling past the arcade sequence, you should find yourself in front of a door...

OPERATE the door and walk through into an office.

EXAMINE statue and **OPERATE** statue arm - you should now see a safe.

USE the little box on the safe.

OPERATE the on/off button on the box on the main picture.

Cycle through the digits on the safe. If a number is in the combination, you should be acknowledged by a light - make a note of each number (what it is and its position in the sequence). Having established the combination, hey presto!

After yet another arcade sequence, you should find yourself aboard an agency sub where you are given a cigarette case and CD, before once more finding yourself submerged...

Having come to a halt, swim to the left, **EXAMINING** each seaweed plant until coming across an elastic band.

Swim to the right.

OPERATE the palm tree on the right.

OPERATE button.

Swim through the hole and **OPERATE** the porthole.

You will now be captured (SURPRISE!)

Time to escape for the third time...

USE the pen on the lock.

USE the watch on the left wall, then on the right wall.

Go to the right and **OPERATE** grill.

That's all for now. *Operation Stealth* will be right back after these messages...

"I don't know what it is, but it's weird and it's pissed off..."

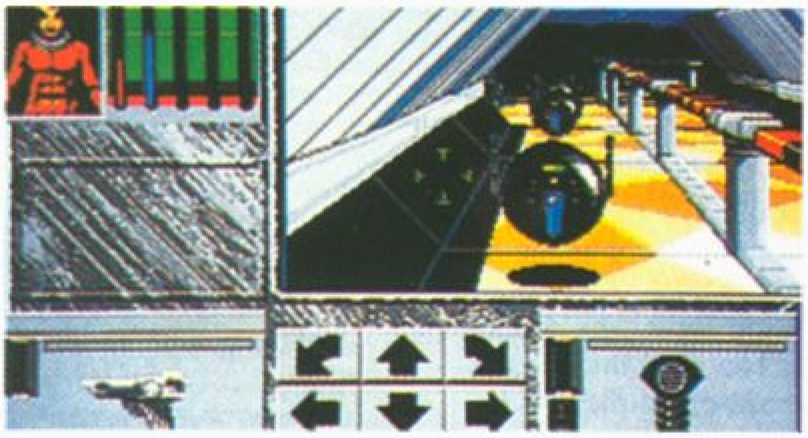
XENOMORPH

LEVEL 7

Make your way to Maintenance, destroying the robot in your path. Take all the necessary chips and kill all the droids. Pick up all the RL ammo and the grenade. Go to ladder M, recharge your weapons and go down. (The chipcards are of little use in the lower levels and backpack space is needed, so leave them here.) Save the game here...

LEVEL 8

Before collecting any objects on this level, it is a good idea to run around blasting as many aliens as possible - the larger of which require mines and grenades to dispatch. Take the card and then the charge (lower left corner of the map). Get the large laser (which you should use from here on) and the charge, and destroy all remaining alien eggs. Exit via N.



LEVEL 9

CORPSES! (Luckily all dead...) Kill both aliens at the start and take the card. Walk to ladder O and take all the cards from the nearby AGU. Drop all cards near the ladder. Visit the armoury taking batteries, charges and RL bullets. Recharge at O and descend.

LEVEL 10

Welcome to the maze... Find your way to ladder Q and SAVE before going down... Until next month, bug-hunters, you're on your own.

DRAKKHEN

On and on, the road goes on... trudging through barren lands alone can be a wearying experience, so all thanks go to Adam Morley's handy hints on gardening... sorry, I mean... Drakkhen. This month, Stage Three jostles for space. Read on, brave adventurer, your quest awaits...

STAGE THREE

Before attempting this stage, one of your character's should have a bow (arch), bought from the swordsmith. Make your way towards Prince Haaggkhen's palace and, on arriving, use your Scout or Mage to cast the unlocking spell (be sure to stand far enough from the drawbridge to prevent your untimely demise) and enter.

Operate the far right symbol to cancel the force field. Go up, unlock the door, enter the next room and turn left. At this point, your weakest character should lead, with the strongest last - it is also advisable to cast a force-field around your magic-users and take yourself out of combat mode.

Now... enter the room marked "Bats" and run like hell towards the doorway ahead. Bats aside, the room itself sucks out hit points so hurry along. Once all characters are in the room beyond, select combat mode and replenish hit points via your magic users. Having reached the room prior to that marked "fire", disable combat mode.

Walk each character through singly, leaving the group leader until last. **IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP EACH CHARACTER NEAR THE OUTER WALLS TO PREVENT ATTACK BY FLAMES.** Follow the same procedure for the second "fire" room, regrouping the party in the room to the right of it. Once through the door at the bottom of this screen, use the Warrior to try the door to the right. If locked, use the Scout or Sorcerer to cast the unlocking spell - using a key works, but the room beyond will not appear! Find your way to the circular fountain and cast the "light" spell. Position your warrior in front of the fountain and select operate. Your character will now appear in a room with two waves.

Run to the top of the room, collect the armour and weapons, equip yourself and either fight, or run through the door to the left. Go through the door in the bottom wall of this room. Do likewise for the remaining characters (avoiding combat in the case of magic users) bearing in mind that light must be maintained for the portal to work.

Beyond the "wave" room is the main dungeon. You must enter here to trigger certain events. When all characters are gathered and fully recovered in the room below, re-enter the dungeon room. Give the bow to your Priest or Sorcerer and send them into the room on the left - you will come across a powerful Ghoul. Move behind the pillar on the right and fire out with the bow. Meanwhile your Warrior and Scout should be holding back the waves.

Having killed the Ghoul, move all characters around the edge of the room and enter the door at the bottom. **DO NOT** collect the armour. You may now leave the palace and enter the frozen wastes of the North... More next time, *Drakkhen* fans.

XIPHOS

Yay! Here's the first instalment in a player's guide to Electronic Zoo's Xiphos, straight from the lips of its programmers, SPA. Take it away, boys...

"Xiphons are argumentative little blighters and will pick a fight on any pretext. You've only got to lob a couple of friendly missiles in their direction to have them frothing at the proboscis. And when they haven't got a human to pick on they'll quite happily blast the hell out of each other.

"Even so, you'd hardly think that in a war game you'd be called upon to actually break up a scrap. Well, you'd be wrong. In *Xiphos* it's divide and conquer all the way. Just find a party where a few Xiphons are engaging in a full and frank exchange of views, locate the weaker element and drop a judicious missile in its front garden. With the advantage of surprise you can do more damage with a single missile than with dozens when the enemy knows you're there.

"For example, take a typical *Xiphos* situation: a Pio supply ship en-route between bases got ambushed by a Qon freeloader. A Pio fighter picked up the blip and came over to investigate. By the time you get there the Qon is beginning to feel the strain. You size up the situation, creep up on the Q and foreclose his option to breathe. Peace (and you're 85 credits better off).

"Once they've noticed you, the Xiphons are much harder to dispose of and you might be forced to reconsider your status as a living being. One of their most unco-operative habits is to pretend that they are running away, get you to chase them and stay an SLU or two out of range, dropping back now and then just long enough to unload a couple of hundredweight of fissionable material in your direction.

"Of course, if you have energy, then your shields can take it. But if you want to know how to stop their little game, here's the lowdown: don't chase, just sit there. Xiphons can't resist a fight and they'll be back, waving their prehensile antennae behind them.

"Even better, turn the tables and have them chase you. Head off after another ship of your own side and play one off against the other. When they're weak from combat you can take out both of them. With a bit of luck you'll have a tasty Xiphon for breakfast.

"One of the best ways to get ahead in *Xiphos* is to hit the enemy where it hurts the most, in his own base. You might not like relaxing in four atmospheres of neat ammonia but Xiphons love it and bases are about the only places they get a chance to put their flippers up. Find out next month how to do this.

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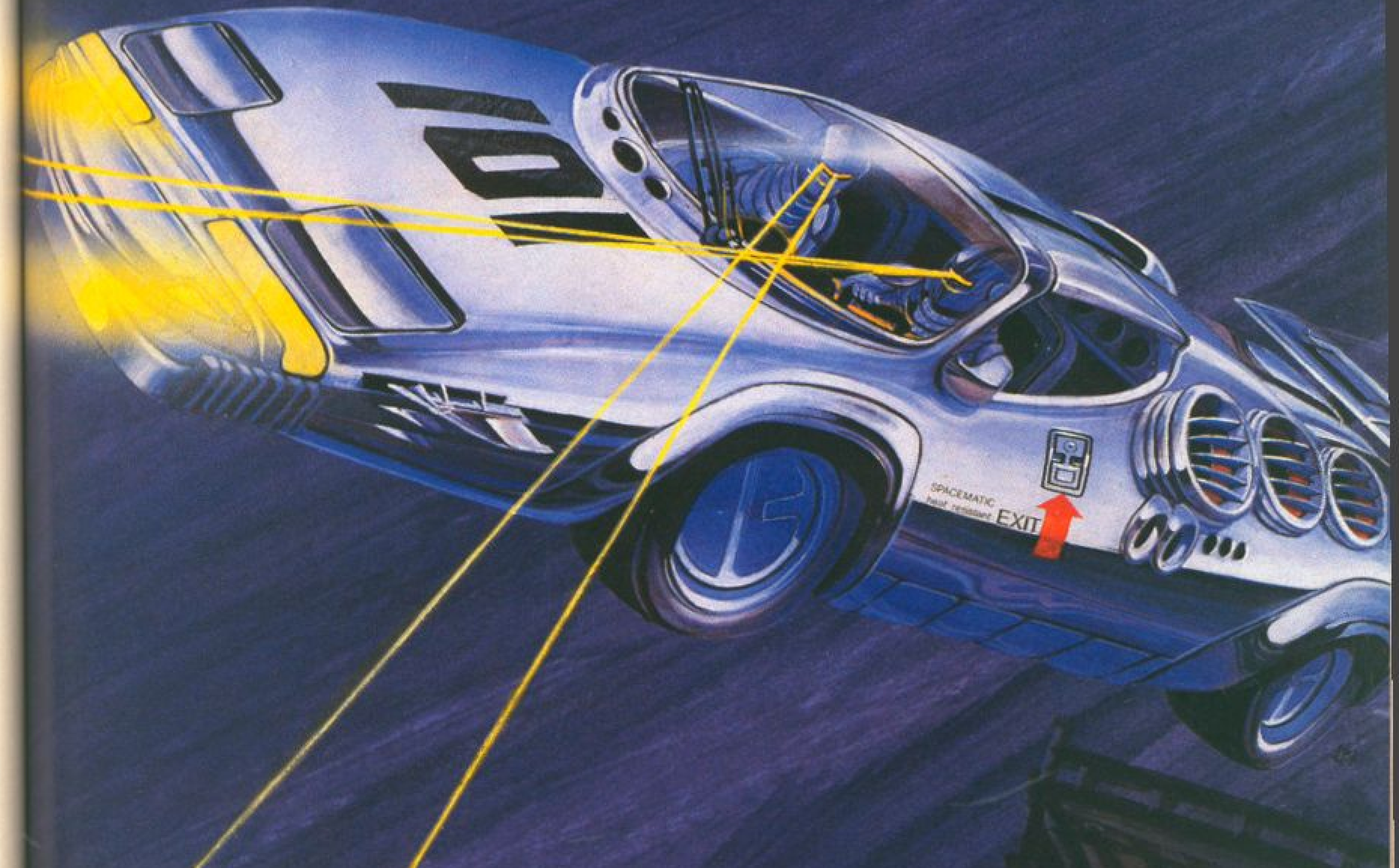

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The Commodore A500 Batman Pack must surely rank as one of the most popular computer packs ever! The pack features the **Commodore Amiga 500 computer** with **mouse controller** and **TV modulator**, plus four top software titles. The software includes: '**Batman The Movie**' - Rid Gotham City of the cunning joker, in Ocean's top selling title based on the blockbuster Batman film; **New Zealand Story** - high quality conversion of the leading arcade game; **Interceptor** - Dogfight with two F-16's in this leading flight simulator; **Deluxe Paint II** - top quality Amiga graphics package which set the standard for others to follow. Return the coupon for further details.

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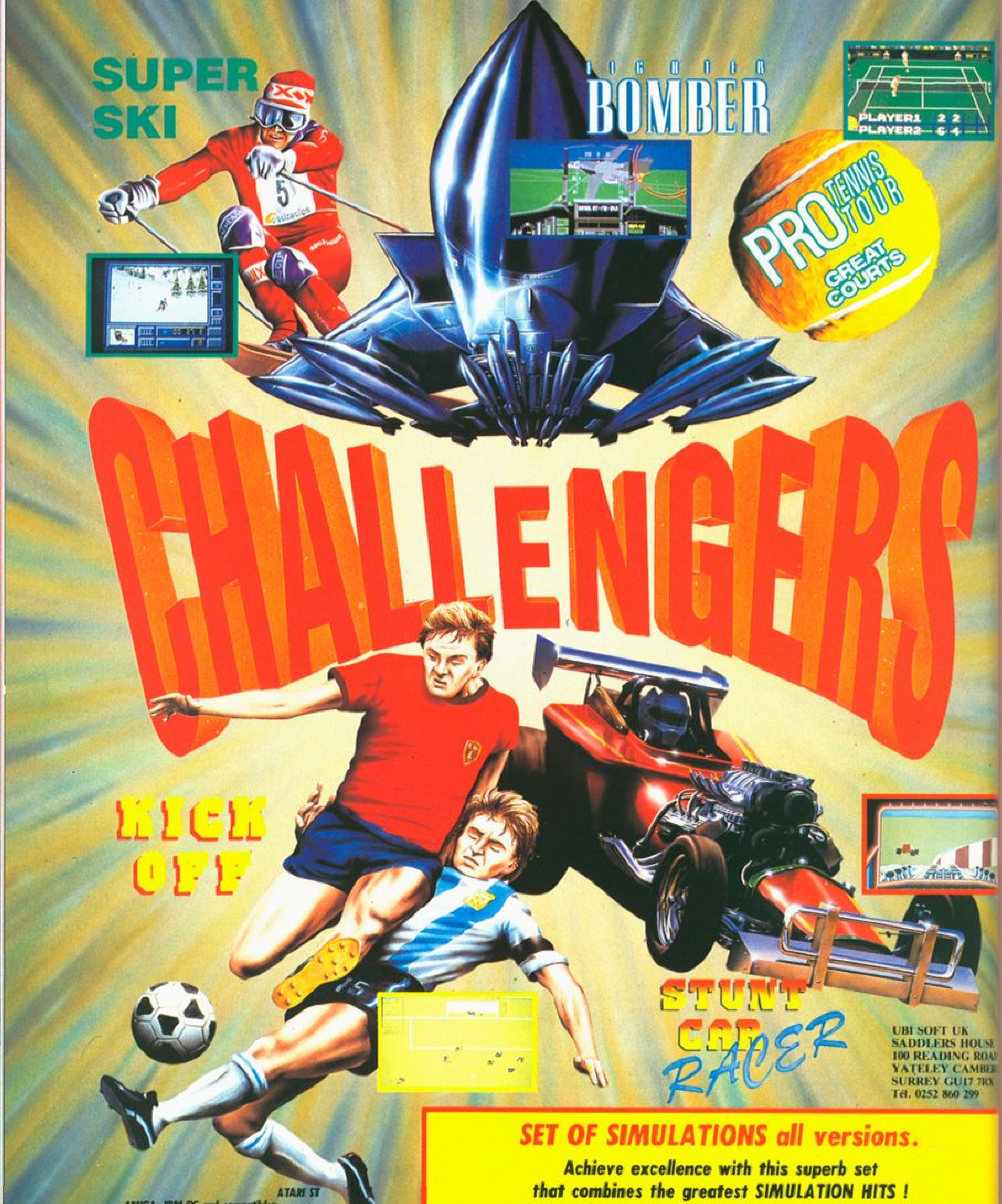
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Note 1 ! KICK OFF is not available in the PC version.
Note 2 ! In the SPECTRUM version STUNT CAR RACER and SUPERSKI are replaced by CARRIER COMMAND, P47 and RICK DANGEROUS.

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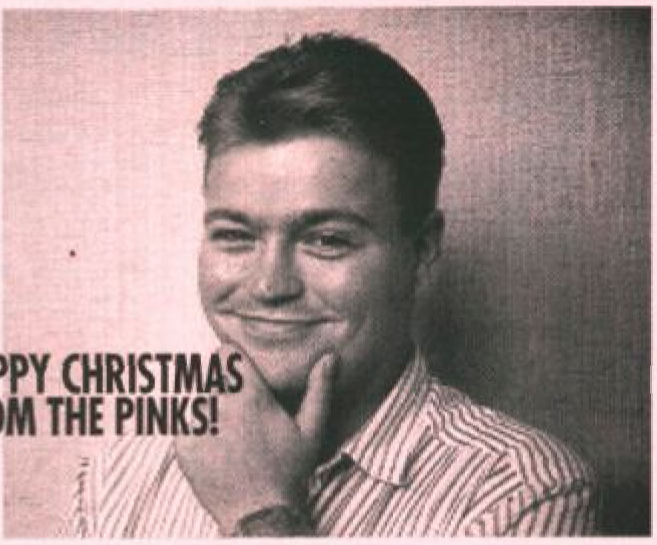

131 Happy Christmas!

Mark Smiddy gets festive with a brief guide to X-mas rated presents for owners of all micros.

128 ACE Charts

OK, just how smart are you? Can you predict which games are going to be 'in' next month? Try it – and check out which titles the reviewers are tipping for the top spots.

159 Hot off the Shelf

Diddums wants a litley-whittley Chrissie prezzie, eh? Diddums had better get his act together and check out this games guide, then...

135 Hardware Buyer's Guide

You've decided. Not content with just a computer, you want to wile away the Xmas hours with a console as well. Here are all the hardware facts you need on the hotboxes most likely to burn holes in your budget.

143 Direct Line

...to YOUR micro. If you own one of the ten major micros or consoles, there's a section for your computer here as ACE correspondents talk man to machine...

157 Win! Win! Win!

A Pink Page Special Christmas Compo, for those of you too mean – or too unfortunate – to go out and get a festive game of your own.

173 ACE Crossword

The infamous ACE Crossward – crack it and win a prize.

169 Adventureline

Pat Winstanley with her regular section for dedicated adventurers.

165 The ACE Diary

Our monthly guide to what's on where and what's out when

167 ACE Deals and Shopwatch

ACE rounds up some of the latest freebies you can get at your local dealer, plus Dirk Longhorn's regular monthly view from the other side of the counter...

176 Encyclopaedia Micromannica!

Over the years ACE has consistently given gamesters the low down on entertainment technology. If you've missed a vital issue, check here...

175 PD Update

Mark Smiddy with another selection of cheap software

174 ACE Readers Pages

Small ads, big sales. Your chance to buy, sell and tell the world.

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100
GO TO SPAIN!

ACE has brought you nearly 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, covering the Philips CD-I machine – then check out page 176

ACE CHARTS

The ACE Charts give you the definitive list of top scoring games EVERY MONTH – as reviewed by ALL British games magazines.

DID YOU WIN LAST MONTH?

Round 12 entrants failed dismally when it came to Amiga, C64, and PC titles. PC experts didn't realise that the reviewers were likely to be KO'd by *4D Boxing* (and neither did we, to be honest). On the C64, perhaps more understably, all entrants missed the attractions of CDS' *Complete Games Centre*, and no-one (which perhaps IS surprising) thought of Captive for the Amiga.

Now for the good news...for some. **Luke Smith** of Birmingham spotted Ivan Ironman Stewart on the Spectrum. So did several other people, but Luke's was the entry out of the bag on the final selection. **Erik de Loas** of The Netherlands spotted two winners – *Cadaver* for the ST and top softco Magnetic Scrolls. Erik missed out on the *Cadaver* selection round but struck lucky on the Stockmarket. **Richard O'Brien** of Penn did exactly the same, but his lucky turn came with Cadaver. Finally, **F. Sheikh** of Redbridge was one of a very few who spotted *Iron Lord* for the CPC. Prizes for all are on their way.

What you can win...
You'll get a mystery game worth up to £25 for your machine if you can pick out NEXT MONTH's top chart entries. Get all five right in any category and you'll get £150 worth of software! Entry instructions are opposite.

THE STOCKMARKET

In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. It's a list of the top 25 softcos as determined by the ratings their games are currently receiving. You can see their fortunes rising and falling in each issue...

Having collated all the games reviewed in the latest issues of computer magazines, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the second column. So, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC chart printed over the page. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.

The last column shows how well a company's games have fared compared to the Software Index. This single figure represents the average review mark (expressed as a percentage) that all games, all formats, received during the last month. It's a quick guide to how good the current crop of titles is, and each company's Index score shows how well their games compare to the norm. For example, in this month's chart, US Gold's current titles are worth 4.81 percentage points above average - according to the industry's reviewers.

We print only the top 25 companies each month. In fact, we keep tabs on all of them, but you don't want to read through a list of over 100 names in every issue. Occasionally, a new company will enter the listings, in which case its name is marked with an asterisk.

Finally, we take care that the information here is genuinely useful. To that end, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review.

Software index: 75.65
Still going up! Looks like this Christmas could be a really hot one!

PUBLISHER	SCORE	+/-	INDEX
Rainbird	89.33	n/a	13.68
Digital Magic	86.75	n/a	11.1
Micro Style	85.15	0.17	9.5
Activision	83.72	2.97	8.07
Microprose	83.69	-2.64	8.04
Gremlin	83.67	-4.21	8.02
Origin	83.47	n/a	7.82
Storm (Sales Curve)	83.25	0.81	7.6
Spectrum Holobyte	83	n/a	7.35
ARC	82.67	n/a	7.02
Innerprise	82.5	n/a	6.85
Ocean	82.24	7.23	6.59
Mirrorsoft	82	n/a	6.35
Infogrames	81.89	n/a	6.24
Palace	81.54	14.37	5.89
Audiogenic	81.05	18.47	5.4
Atlantis	81	n/a	5.35
US Gold	80.46	4.08	4.81
Millennium	80.3	4.8	4.65
PSS/Mirrorsoft	80	14.25	4.35
Electronic Zoo	79.6	n/a	3.95
Image Works	79.08	11.97	3.43
Empire	78.86	-5.72	3.21
Domark	78.79	0.85	3.14
Electronic Arts	78.61	-7.49	2.96

AMIGA

Powermonger	Electronic Arts	95.08
Lotus Esprit Turbo	Gremlin	89.46
Immortal	Electronic Arts	88
Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	87.75
Mean Streets	US Gold	87.75

Bullfrog's follow-up to Populous obviously hasn't disappointed anyone: straight in at number one with a huge score.

C64

Plotting	Ocean	90
Rick Dangerous II	Micro Style	89.25
Lords of Chaos	Blade	88.5
Ace/Ace 2	Encore	88.25
Navy Seals*	Ocean	88

*cartridge only

Ocean's Taito coin-op conversion just edges out Rick Dangerous II for the top slot, while two budget charters from last time survive into this month's chart.

AMSTRAD CPC

Twin World	Ubi Soft	83.17
TNT	Domark	83.17
Pro Golf	Code Masters	74.5
Guardian Angel	Code Masters	72
Ace/Ace 2	Encore	59.25

Ubi Soft obviously knows a thing or two about CPC games. Last month it had three titles in this chart, including the number one, this time, a fourth Ubi Soft game takes over the top slot.

IBM PC

Midwinter	Rainbird	92.5
Welltris	Infogrames	87.55
Covert Action	Microprose	87.07
Secret of Monkey Island	US Gold	87
Bad Blood	Origin	60

A case of four hits and one other here. *Midwinter* has been hanging around this chart for months, thanks to delays.

WHAT THE FIGURES ABOVE MEAN...

First, of course, you've got the game. Then th software house and – in the last column – th average score (converted to a percentage wit typical ACE precision to two decimal places) th game received in ALL reviews during the las month. Don't forget that the review ratings ar taken from all UK magazines, not just ACE, so w don't necessarily agree with some of the judgements here, but all review ratings are, to a certai extent, subjective.

SPECTRUM AND ST CHARTS
OPPOSITE

HOW TO ENTER

STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** – or write your entry on the **back of an envelope.** Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, and the Round Number.

STEP TWO

Tell us your age and which machine you own. Just in case you win!

STEP THREE

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the six machine specific charts. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the Spectrum
- the top game for the C64
- the top game for the CPC's
- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE! But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

STEP FOUR (OPTIONAL)

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:
The top softco will be...(name of company)'

STEP FIVE (OPTIONAL)

If you want to go for the jackpot £150 prize, then select any of the previous categories and try to predict the top FIVE entries for next month instead of just the top one. Then tell us which category you're predicting for – it can be either the Stockmarket or any of the machine categories in Step Three. REMEMBER – YOU CAN ONLY SUBMIT **ONE** JACKPOT CATEGORY!

STEP SIX

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (31st December). The address is:

ACE Stockmarket
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The first correct forecast for each category taken out of the hat wins the prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize.

THIS IS ROUND 14

Each month's competition has a round number so that we can correctly identify entries. You MUST include the round number on your postcard otherwise your entry may not be processed correctly.

THE RULES

- All entries must be received by December 31st 1990.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

ATARI ST

Spindizzy Worlds	**Activision**	**90.67**
Immortal	**Electronic Arts**	**87.5**
Turrican	**Rainbow Arts**	**86.25**
Mean Streets	**US Gold**	**85.26**
Shadow of the Beast	**Psygnosis**	**84.83**

All change this month. Both *Turrican* and *Shadow of the Beast* are a bit late on the ST compared to other formats; has the extra programming time been well spent?

SPECTRUM

Ivan Ironman Stewart	**Virgin**	**91**
Rick Dangerous II	**Micro Style**	**90.5**
Daley Thompson Challenge	**Hit Squad**	**89**
Saint Dragon	**Storm**	**86**
Prison Riot	**Players Premier**	**81.5**

***Ivan Ironman Stewart* has been two months in a row at number one, but late dashes for the line from *Rick D* and *Daley T* threaten to topple him next time.**

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EVERYONE AT CONSOLE QUEST WISHES YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

We, at Console Quest, would like to THANK all of our customers for the help you have given us over the last year. We hope that you will continue to support us in the future. Thank you very much from Anna, David, Ruth, Little John, Johnboy & Becky.

Now for Christmas prezzie time! Our prices are pretty cool, how about a MEGADRIVE or PC ENGINE for £155 for instance.

We supply the games and machines for the GAMEBOY, PC ENGINE, LYNX, SEGA-MEGADRIVE & NEO-GEO, GAME GEAR, POWERCADE & (hopefully) both the FAMICON and PC ENGINE HAND HELD. Our stocks include these games listed below :-

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F.FANTASY LEGEND	GOMALA SPEED	BURNING FORCE	VIETNAM -'75
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We are here to help you obtain the maximum pleasure from your machine. At Console Quest, we play them too, you know!
PS We will be at the 16Bit Show at HAMMERSMITH on 4-6 JAN 1991. Bring your oldies to trade for newies! See you there.

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HAPPY XMAS!

Mark Smiddy makes mental contact (VERY mental) with a gnome in Santa's grotto who reckons he has a good line on gift ideas for gamesters. Whatever machine you've got, there's a gnomic suggestion for you here...

By special arrangement with ACE, Guilder (the little lost gnome) reports direct from Santa's Grotto on what the best-dressed micros will be wearing this Christmas

STOCKING FILLERS

The essential peripherhal this year for any games nut must be a subscription to ACE magazine. Yes this is the one. Imagine it no more trudging down to the shops in the pouring rain and driving snow just to discover the shop have sold out. A full 12 issues of the most informed games mag this side of the moon delivered straight to your door. Phone 0858 410510 for full details, or 0858 410888 for the credit card hotline. A UK sub costs just £17.95.

For those long winter nights spent blasting away at alien forces or just playing your favourite tunes, the ***Compulink Stereo Headphone Adapter*** should come in handy. This beautifully constructed little gadget has two headphone sockets and a volume control. Suitable for Amiga and STe machines this should keep parents happy.

SAVE A QUID!

Every penny counts, guv, and so US Gold have generously offered ACE readers £1 off ANY game you order from them between now and Christmas. All you have to do is send your cheque for the full amount less £1

(full catalogue details available on request from the address below) and mention the magic words ACE Special £1 Offer. The address is:

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Or how about this for PC, ST and Amiga: "My mouse has no ball." "Oh, how does he roll." "On an optical surface that reflects the light from two LEDs. This is focused onto the surface of a light sensitive chip that decodes the movement. I got mine from Golden Image. What's your's called?"

Owners of most ST machines should find Meedmore's ***Stickshift*** a liberation from the drudgery of continually swopping mouse and joytsick leads. This little goody plugs into the mouse port and provides two indpendent ports for the joystick and mouse. To switch between the two all you have to do is use the one you want and presto, this little box of tricks does the rest.

Owners of Lynx, Gameboy, Atari, PC, Amigas etc. should find an interconnection lead to connect two machines very useful. The PC, ST and Amiga can all be connected using a fairly standard RS232 null modem cable. The other machines need a custom lead. Specifics aside, these ehance the thrill of playing many games (*Stunt Car Racer*, *Gauntlet*, *F-16 Combat Pilot* etc.) by allowing two players to fight each other in a head-to-head battle for supremacy.

WHAT THE WELL-DRESSED REINDEER IS WEARING THIS CHRISMAS...

Go for it! You too could sport the T-shirt universally acclaimed by the fashion industry as 1990's Most Tasteful Computer Magazine T-Shirt Design, produced exclusively for us by ACE Art Editor Jim Willis and available in all sizes for an unbelievable £5.99 inc VAT AND postage. Just send your cheque to:

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BLOOMER FILLERS

For the comms nut who has everything, a nice new ***HT9600*** VT42, V42bis modem from Hi-Tec Modems should come in very handy. The feature packed little beauty has all the features the budding hacker should ever need and a lot more beside. Including full error correction, data compression, speed buffering up to 38,400 baud and an extended Hayes command set.

Probably the ultimate solution for any mouse or joystick problem is the ***Gravis Mousestick***. The first computer controlled joystick in the world, the Mousestick can be programmed to emulate just about anything from a mouse, to a trackball to a switched joystick.

BLOOMER BUSTERS

You're going to have to tie a knot in granny's bloomers for this one. The Megaforce I is another one of those arcade cabinets we keep hearing about. The difference this one is is empty. That's right, you get the cabinet and put your own machine and monitor inside. It will accept just about anything from a Spectrum to an FM Towns and will set you back just short of 200 quid.

Something to put in the above might as well be a ***Neo Geo***. Although this machine is still in the process of being officially launched in the UK, it is still available through grey imports. Games are as good as the real thing, because they are the real thing - straight out of arcade machines. Cost around £400 for the main machine plus another £200 for cartridges.

And finally folks, the tour de force, a Kray XM-P. Probably the fastest and most expensive piece of computer hardware in the world today. Just look at those graphics. Next time you watch a move, ask yourself this: is it real or is it Kray? We've got half a gross of these to deliver, the only problem is we can't get them into the sled. Oh, dear that sounds like Santa now - and who is that with him? Two men in white coats carrying fishing rods! Time I made an exit.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We cannot accept any responsibility for the opinions of a mentally deranged gnome or the sanity of other painted garden furniture or figurines.

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HARD SELL

Have yourself a merry little console! These game-playing marvels look set to be THE big-sellers this Xmas. So which name should you be bunging up the chimney on a scrap of paper?

You don't want to get stuck with a redundant or unsupported machine, or one that doesn't fit your needs or your pocket. So, to help you make that all-important decision, here's a full run-down on all the major contenders. These packages and prices are the ones you'll find on the shop shelves this Xmas.

Generally, local dealers should be the first place to make further enquiries, although we've provided company contact numbers in case you're having real problems.

The Star Ratings are there as a rough qualitative guide; the more stars the better.

AMSTRAD GX4000

Package: GX4000 console, 2 controllers and *Burning Rubber* game.
Processor: 4MHz Z80A
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £99
Contact: Amstrad 0782 566344

IN BRIEF

Amstrad have partly gone up the Commodore path, but have wisely taken the opportunity to upgrade the hardware. The palette is increased, with multitasking hardware scrolling and 16 hardware sprites increasing to 32 with interrupt tricks. Unfortunately the sound chip is the same old tinny one used in the CPCs, albeit in stereo - you can't have everything, I suppose. While some software houses express reservations of the machine being a success outside Europe (and hence reticent about committing support to it), many are working on titles for the machine.

GRAPHICS
Resolution: Same as Amstrad CPC.
Palette: 4096
Colours: 32
TV: Yes.
Monitor Output: Yes.
Monitor Supplied: No.
Monitor Options: SCART, Amstrad socket.
Sprites: 16, 32 with hardware interrupts.
Speed: Pretty good for 8-bit technology.

SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor.
MIDI: No.
Stereo Output: Yes.
Performance: Unimpressive 3 channel chip as on old CPCs, but now runs independently of main processor.

HARDWARE
Joystick: 2 game controllers supplied.
Ports: Monitor/TV ports, stereo headphone socket, 3 joystick ports (2 digital, 1 analogue).

SOFTWARE
Price: Around £25.
Cartridge Memory: 128K
Existing Software Base: Small.but growing fast.
Current Releases: Thirty titles due by January 1991.
Prospects: Very good, with several software houses working on titles.

BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: None as yet.
Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★★
Overall: ★★★★

ATARI LYNX

Package: Lynx with *California Games.*
Processor: 16MHz 6502
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £179.95
Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The Lynx was designed by a team including RJ Mical, one of the men behind the Amiga. If that doesn't convince you consider it runs a fast 6502, has 8Mb of game storage on its cards and supports multi-player games. The graphics hardware has built in hardware scrolling and image scaling. Software is a little thin at the moment but bound to increase during 1991.

GRAPHICS
Resolution: 160 x 102
Palette: 4096
Colours: 16
TV: No
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: Yes - 3.5 inch backlit colour LCD
Monitor Options: None
Sprites: Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!
Speed: Fast

SOUND
Speaker Quality: Very good
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 4 channel, 5 octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

HARDWARE
Joystick: 4 way joypad.
Ports: Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack.

SOFTWARE
Price: £30-35.
Cartridge Memory: 8Mb
Existing Software Base: Very small.
Current Releases: *California Games* is a great freebie.
Prospects: Uncertain but several new titles in the pipeline.

BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Very few
Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS
Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★

ATARI VCS

Package: Both VCS2600 and VCS7800 come with controller and free game.
Processor: 6507 (2600)/6502 (7800)
Console Memory: Not known.
Recommended Retail Price: VCS2600 £39.99; VCS7800 £69.99
Contact: Atari PR 071 388 9871

IN BRIEF

The VCS2600 is a reboxed version of the original Atari games console which, until a couple of years ago, remained the best selling home video games system of all time. The VCS7800 is a revamped version of the VCS2600 with a faster processor, slightly better sound and vastly improved graphics.

GRAPHICS
Resolution: 192 x 160 (2600); 320 x 242 (7800)
Palette: 16 (2600)/256 (7800)
Colours: 4 (2600)/16 (7800)
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: No
Sprites: N/A/64
Speed: Slow

SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on TV
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: No
Performance: Limited to 1 channel on 2600 and two on 7800.

HARDWARE
Joystick: Supplied
Ports: 2 x 9 pin D for joysticks; TV; cartridge port.

SOFTWARE
Price: £7-13.
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Small
Current Releases: Rare
Prospects: Unsure in the light of new competition from Japan.

BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: Worth looking
Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

	2600	7800
Graphics:	★	★★
Sound:	★	★★
Expansion:	None	None
Overall:	★	★★

C64 GAMES SYSTEM

Package: C64GS console, controller and 4 games (*Klax, Fiendish Freddy, Flimbo's Quest* and *International Soccer*).
Processor: 1MHz 6502
Console Memory: 64K
Recommended Retail Price: £99.99
Contact: Commodore 0628 770088

IN BRIEF

Take a Commodore C64 computer, remove the keyboard and stick it in an unattractive slab of a box and what have you got? A "new" console! It's an unusual move, but with the clout of Commodore behind it, it just might work.

GRAPHICS
Resolution: 160 x 200 in multicolour mode.
Palette: 16
Colours: 16
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: Yes
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: RGB
Sprites: 8
Speed: Slow CPU, helped out by custom graphics and sound chips.

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: No
Performance: 3 channel SAM - one of the best 8-bit sound chips.
HARDWARE
Joystick: Joypad supplied.
Ports: None
SOFTWARE
Price: Around £25.
Cartridge Memory: 4Mbits.
Existing Software Base: Potentially huge, but small at the moment. Commodore anticipate around 100 titles by Xmas.
Current Releases: Plenty forthcoming from various software houses.
Prospects: Uncertain. Do people really want a console version of an ageing, though admittedly good, computer? Software support is likely to be pretty good for a while at least.
BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: None
Maintenance: One year guarantee.

STAR RATINGS
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★
Overall: ★★

NINTENDO NES

Package: Standard Pack includes console, plus 2 game controllers and *Super Mario Brothers* game. Mutant Machine pack as above but substitutes *Turtles* game for *Mario*. Action Pack as Standard, but includes Zapper gun and *Duck Hunt* game.
Processor: Not known.
Console Memory: 2K.
Recommended Retail Price: Standard Pack £79.95; Deluxe Pack £99.95.
Contact: Deighton PR 071.836 2973

IN BRIEF
The world's largest selling console, largely because of the playability of some of its games rather than its hardware specification, which is 8-bit average.
GRAPHICS
Resolution: 256 x 240
Palette: 52
Colours: 16
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: No
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: None
Sprites: N/A
Speed: Average
SOUND
Speaker Quality: N/A
Stereo Output: No
Performance: Average
HARDWARE
Joystick: 2 dedicated controllers supplied. IR wireless controllers with 30ft range available for £39.95.
Ports: None out of the ordinary.
SOFTWARE
Price: £20-40.
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Over 50 titles available here. Many more available in Japan but these require a converter to run.
Current Releases: Nintendo predict about 2-3 titles per month.
Prospects: In the UK, improving due to increased support – but this is yesterday's technology.
Software Loading: Instant
BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP.
Second Hand Availability: A few.
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★
Expansion: ★★★★
Overall: ★★★

NINTENDO GAMEBOY

Package: Main unit with *Tetris* game.
Processor: 1MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.
Console Memory: 16K
Recommended Retail Price: £69.99.
Contact: Deighton PR 071 836 2973

IN BRIEF
Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics – this machine has some superb titles and the two-player link-up option has tremendous potential.
GRAPHICS
Resolution: 20 x 18 characters.
Colours: 4 grey shades.
Monitor Supplied: Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.
Sprites: 40 8 x 8 pixels.
Speed: Fast for what it is.
SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on headphones.
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: Plays a lot better than it looks.
HARDWARE
Joystick: Built-in 8-way joypad.
Ports: Headphone socket;dual-machine interface.
SOFTWARE
Price: £20-25.
Cartridge Memory: 64K
Existing Software Base: The best for any handheld.
Current Releases: Increasing
Prospects: Excellent
BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: None.
Maintenance: One year's warranty

STAR RATINGS
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Expansion: Dual machine interface has lots of potential.
Overall: ★★★★★

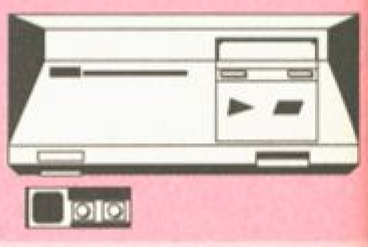
NEC PC ENGINE

Package: Console unit, controller and free game
Processor: Customised 8-bit.
Console Memory: 64K internal, 8K video. (Turbographx: 128K internal, 32K video.)
Recommended Retail Price: N/A (US price around $199)
Contact: Local dealers

IN BRIEF
Sadly, it now seems unlikely that this machine will ever be officially supported by NEC in the UK. Its CD-ROM add-on drive is now the largest selling CD unit on the market and is responsible for much of the recent increase in CD development. There's also a 16-bit version, vastly more powerful, called the Turbographx, but this is only rarely available through importers and at a price – usually around £300. NEC also have a handheld version of the Engine which is software compatible with its larger brother.
GRAPHICS
Resolution: 256 x 216
Palette: 512 (Turbographx: 1024)
Colours: 32 - 16 background and 16 shared by sprites.
TV: Yes
Monitor Output: N/A
Monitor Supplied: No
Monitor Options: N/A
Sprites: 64 (Turbographx: 128)
Speed: Very fast considering this is an 8-bit!
SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on monitor.
MIDI: No
Stereo Output: Yes
Performance: 6-channel stereo
HARDWARE
Disk Format: CD ROM at extra cost.
Disk Price: Read-only so N/A
Disk Performance: Superb - the CD ROM adds a new dimension.
Joystick: Supplied with dedicated controller.
SOFTWARE
Price: Around £25-40 imported.
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Large
Current Releases: Increasing.
Prospects: Good.
BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: Currently grey import.
Second Hand Availability: V Rare
Maintenance: Watch out - grey imported machines rarely have any real warranty.

STAR RATINGS
Graphics: ★★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Expansion: ★★★★
Overall: ★★★★

SEGA MASTER



Package: Console using cartridge or smart card plus game controller and *Alex Kidd in Miracle World* game.
Recommended Retail Price: £79.99; £99.95 (+ light gun); £129.95 (+ light gun and 3D glasses).
Processor: Z80.
Console Memory: 32K.
Contact: Virgin Mastertronic 071 727 8070

IN BRIEF
Japanese software base is not as good as Nintendo's but more titles reach UK. Mastertronic have given good support to the machine so the prospects look good. Like the Nintendo, however, this 8-bit machine uses established but dated technology.
GRAPHICS
Resolution: 256 x 192
Palette: 64
Colours: 16
TV: Yes
Monitor: No
SOUND
Speaker Quality: Depends on TV.
Performance: 3 channels.
HARDWARE
Joystick: Game controller supplied.
SOFTWARE
Price: £10-40 (typically £25)
Cartridge Memory: Not known.
Existing Software Base: Very good.
Current Releases: Good
Prospects: As good as any 8-bit console.
BUYLINES
Best Buy Price: As RRP
Second Hand Availability: Some
Maintenance: One year's guarantee. Faulty machines return to dealer.

STAR RATINGS
Graphics: ★★★
Sound: ★★★
Expansion: ★★★
Overall: ★★★

SEGA MEGADRIVE

Package: Console unit, controller, and *Altered Beast* game.
Processor: 68000 + Z80B support.
Console Memory: 74K main, 64K video.
Recommended Retail Price:

AMSTRAD

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IN BRIEF

Excellent example of the new 16-bit console technologies. The first decent 16-bit console to receive official support in the UK.

GRAPHICS

Resolution: 320 x 224

Palette: 512

Colours: 64

TV: Yes

Monitor: No

Sprites: 80

Speed: Very fast

SOUND

Speaker Quality: N/A

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 12 channel stereo sound is produced by a custom FM chip and sounds fantastic.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Dedicated controller supplied.

SOFTWARE

Price: £30-50 (typically £35).

Cartridge Memory: Not known.

Existing Software Base: Good

Current Releases: Few in UK at present

Prospects: Very good.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP

Second Hand Availability: N/A

Maintenance: One year on UK machines.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★★★

Overall: ★★★★★

SNK NEO-GEO

Package: Console unit, controller unit and memory card (can store 27 games scores).

Processor: 12MHz 68000 + 4MHz Z80A support.

Console Memory: 64K work RAM, 64K video RAM.

Recommended Retail Price: £399

Contact: Active Sales 081 752 0260

IN BRIEF

Technically the most advanced console currently available, the games are of arcade quality, with huge sprites and excellent sound, although the gameplay is a little lacking in the current crop of titles. The game cartridges can store up to 330 Mbits of data, but this is reflected in their price - £199.99! All is not lost, since Active Sales have launched a club where members can rent software for £25 a month. Definitely the system to have if you want to pose, and to be very poor!

GRAPHICS

Resolution: Arcade quality.

Palette: 65536

Colours: 4096

TV: Yes

Monitor Output: Yes

Monitor Supplied: No

Monitor Options: RGB, SCART

Sprites: 380

Speed: Remarkable

SOUND

Speaker Quality: Depends on TV/monitor

MIDI: No

Stereo Output: Yes

Performance: 13 channel stereo.

HARDWARE

Joystick: Supplied, second available for around £70.

Ports: Walkman socket

SOFTWARE

Price: £200.

Cartridge Memory: 330 Mbits.

Existing Software Base: Few at present.

Current Releases: 12 planned by the end of the year.

Prospects: Uncertain, but the members' club could help swing chance in its favour.

BUYLINES

Best Buy Price: As RRP.

Second Hand Availability: None as yet.

Maintenance: One year's guarantee.

STAR RATINGS

Graphics: ★★★★★

Sound: ★★★★★

Expansion: ★

Overall: ★★★★

AND SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS, AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

You haven't called me, for a start. If you have any suggestions or queries regarding the Hardware section then write to me at the usual ACE Address or call during the Hotline hours.

David Upchurch

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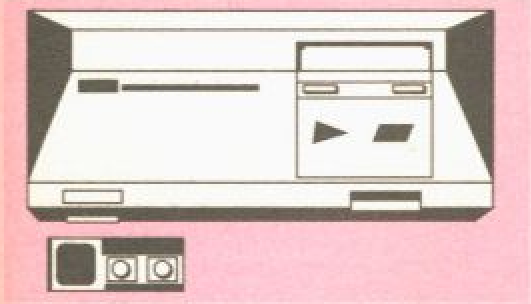

Two Master system games have been currently "on" in the office and they've really become favourites among the team. Super Monoco Grand Prix and Alex Kidd in Shinobi Land have both kept is hitting those control panels way into the evening. Each has a very different style and each deserves a review, so, as if by magic...

SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX

3D race games certainly seem to be the thing of the moment, and it's nice to see a Master system racer which is big enough to go up against the 16 bitters.

Fans of the coin-op should be well pleased with this conversion. Two players have the chance to race in the Monaco Grand Prix, competing against themselves as well as the computer-controlled drone cars. Should you find yourself with an especially good (or unsociable) friend, you can race against another computer-controlled vehicle.

The screen display is split into two halves, each dipicting the car and view of each racer. The track rockets out of the screen at impressive speed, while a map at the top of the screen indicates their position on the track.

A constant reminder of your current position iis found slap bang in the middle of the screen.

Super Monaco GP really is a rather excellent game, containing virtually all of the elements found in the coin-op original. A sound buy.

ALEX KIDD IN SHINOBI WORLD

The Japanese seem incapable of designing any truly gung-ho fighting games. They just can't resist those fruity bonuses.

Alex Kidd is no exception. Here, in a parody of the deluge of ninja games, Alex Kidd must battle the numberous, but not especially fierce warriors.

Guide Alex through the thoroughly colourful and well animated battle-zones, cracking heads and collecting pink-heart strength enhancers. Along the way to his goal, 'Lex must defeat increadingly tough baddies, armed with no more than his sword and his wits.

Despite the throwaway appearance and lightweight nature of the game, there's actually a lot of playability in here. Attaining proficient control of Alex is a genuine challenge and progress through the levels offers just as much reward as the heavyweight games.

Next month, tips tips tips in our Master System games extravaganza!

●Richard Evans

MEGADRIVE

It's probably old news to you by now, but I thought I'd mention it anyway. Sega are apparently developing a IBM PC compatible home computer, but with built-in Megadrive capabilities. So not only will you be able to do a bit of word processing, but you'll also be able to boot up *Strider* for a quick hack when you feel like it.

It looks just like a traditional PC, with a monitor, CPU slab and detachable keyboard, all in a rather drab matt-grey finish. However, mounted on the front of the CPU slab and looking very out of place on a PC, are two joystick ports and a cartridge slot. Obviously no slacker as a games machine, it's also pretty hot as a PC, sporting, as it does, a 16MHz 80286 CPU.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But, will we see it? I 'phoned Virgin Mastertronic, Sega's UK distributor, to see if there were any plans to bring it over here. Unfortunately, a spokeswoman informed me that although there were no current plans, Virgin are interested in distributing as much Sega product as possible on our shores, so who knows? More news when we get it...

The demand for the Megadrive as Xmas approaches is getting pretty heavy! According to Virgin Mastertronic new shipments of the World's best console are being shipped in from Japan even as I write. If you want to get one for Chrimbo I'd advise you get down those shops NOW and place your order!

New official titles being released: *Ghostbusters II* comes out on November 28th and *World Cup Italia '90* comes out on December 6th (just in time to make it into your stocking!).

TARGET EARTH

Tip time! First a nifty little cheat from Jody Goodall of Madchester (Rave On!). Fancy nine Continues? OK, here's what you do. Start a game and destroy your warship, then let 'Rex' die on his way to the shuttle (callous so-and-so). Choose the 'Option' mode and change the pad Reset from Cancel to Enable.

Now, whilst still in 'Option' mode, press Button C and Start simultaneously. A pretty super girlie will slide on screen with nine Continues to offer you. Exit 'Option' mode and play on! In addition, to change the firing set-up press Buttons A, B and C simultaneously, and to become invincible press Start on the second controller.

HERZOG ZWEI

Crazy name for a crazy game! Again, Jody Goodall comes to the rescue to help you reach various game stages with these passwords:

- 5 wins: GGGKHAGOKLO
- 12 wins: BPHOHACAGML
- 19 wins: NPLOFOCAGKP
- 22 wins: IMLPFEGEMLC
- 25 wins: JAJJBPDNCMC
- 28 wins: LILOPBDPIKJ
- 31 wins: JLJOMGJAOKL

Thanks, Jody! Keep writing - please!

Incidentally, I just want to back up what the review in 'Screentest' says about *Strider*. I was a big fan of the arcade game, although I could never get beyond Level 4, and I was totally gobsmacked by the Mega conversion. Talk about arcade perfect!

Talking of perfect conversions, what about the letter in this issue about the quality of Megadrive conversions? It's true that because the machine has a 68000 processor it is gaining rapid popularity with ST and Amiga programmers who want to break into console programming, but so far the number of 'port overs' from those machines has been minimal.

That's so far, however. What about the future? Are we doomed to paying £35 for games that computer owners will only be shelling out £25 for? The good news is almost certainly not. That's because the bulk of Sega software is going to be produced outside the UK, and the Amiga and ST are (unlike OUR machine) only really popular in Europe. Japanese and US software will continue to be generated specifically for the machine.

Anyway, enough of this cheery banter. Hope you have a very Mega Christmas, and see you in the New Year. By the way, did you know that according to the Chinese, 1991 is the Year of the Sega? I kid you... not?

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C64

Two things strike me this month. First, the fact that a grand total of none of the Christmas blockbusters which we so eargerly awaited for review this issue have turned up. And yet, their release dates are incredibly close. As a result, those big-name games will be beckoning you from the shelves for a good three weeks before you can check any reviews. Worrying isn't it?

The second topic this month, and a far more cheery one at that, regards cartridges. The Christmas boom obviously offers softcos the best opportunity to stake their claim in the consoles market.

Ocean, possibly the furthest advanced in cartridge development have roughly divided their product range in half, 50% will be available on console, the remainder will be on tape or disk only.

The rationale behind the move is to make the products which are definite high-profile games cartridge based; it's easier to justify the £19.99 cartridge price for, say, Robocop 2 than the Nightbreed arcade game which is unlikely to receive a particularly warm reception..

It's interesting to note that Total Recall, the game many had chalked up as Ocean's Xmas smash is *not* going to be available on cartridge.

Domark are also keen to wave the cartridge flag, offering three titles previously unavailable on the 64. While the names are extremely familiar, Commodore versions of Badlands, Cyberball and Vindicators never actually made it onto the 64. All programs offer enhancements to the original games.

In general, it appears that games available on cartridge won't be available on the tape or disk formats. The exceptions to the rule (games available across all three) will need to incorporate lots of extra levels on the cartridge version to make sense.

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VINDICATORS - December

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At time of going to press, USG had no firm list of products, but confirmed they will be producing most of their forthcoming titles on cartridge. Interestingly, USG *will* be producing the titles across all three formats, hoping that the enhancements offered in the cartridge version will be enough to persuade us to part with the extra £8.

NEW PLEDGE FROM DI

Sim-maker Digital Integration, who have been producing all those flight simulators for about eight years now have vowed (among with a number of software houses) that they'll be producing lots more 64 stuff in the future, Rod Cobain, Operations Manager says; "It seems a real shame that so many companies are neglecting the 64; it's a massive market, and I think that it's silly to ignore it."

DI's most exciting 64 product at the moment is Extreme, a mixture of wire-frame animation and sprites. And you can look forward to a review next month.

COMPETITION

US Gold, in their wisdom, have offered us **TEN** copies of *ESWAT* and **FIFTY** glamorous *ESWAT* hip-pouches, made from expensive leatherette.

Ten first prize winners get the pouches, and a copy of the game which won't quite fit into them. The remaining forty will get pouches and no game (which will fit into them).

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THE QUESTION

ESWAT is an acronym for:

a) Extra Special Weapons and Tactics
b) Enhanced Special Weapons and Tactics
c) Extra Strike With Terror

The competition closes on the 8th January. Employees of EMAP and US Gold are not eligible for entry. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into.

AND FINALLY...

Still the best game of recent months available for the 64 is.... *Rick Dangerous 2* from Microprose, still keeping us crowded round the 64 after two months!.

●Jim Douglas

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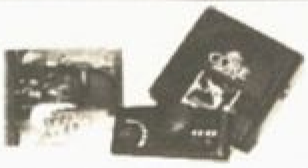

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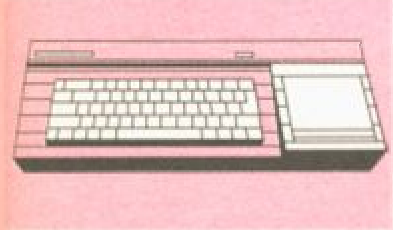

Ding Dong, merrily on steroids, they make our muscles ripple. Ding Dong merrily below, try standing on my nipples."

So this is Christmas, and what have they done?

It's already that time of year again and the big Christmas push has been gently gathering momentum over the last month and is now about to climax, as all the latest releases hit the retailers and leave them gasping with excitement as they all try to capture the Christmas hardware/software rush. But will they?

Next year could go down in Spectrum history as the year of changes. The saga of the future of the +3 Spectrum continues to provoke a complete range of mixed statements from around the industry. Ocean, historically one of the biggest supporters of the Spectrum, will continue to support the machine in a more limited capacity. As Gary Bracey, the enigmatic scouser who's Head of Products for the company said, "We're going to be bringing out software on tape only and moving towards a 128K only format. At the end of the day we are a business and profits on +3 disk games are not enough to be able to continue producing games on disk."

If this means that there are not enough +3's in the market to justify the continuation of disk based software, does it also mean that next year could see the end of the +3?

Brian Thomson of Omidale Ltd, a mail order outfit in Derby, says that sales of the +3 are increasing all the time. But he can see reasons that may have affected the chain stores decision to stop selling the machine.

"High street chains are just box shifters. They deal in quantities in much the same way as Amstrad do. If they won't take the machine then Amstrad are less likely to produce the machine themselves. One of the reasons that they may have stopped is due to the return rate on +3's. We have a return rate of 1 in 10 or less - this figure due to us testing each machine before it is sent out. High street chains do not have the expertise to be able to do this."

Finally, Peter Roeback, of Amstrad said that the +3 was an ongoing product that is not produced all the time. He felt that the move to tape only games was something that software houses could only explain. Unable to give any figures on production of the +3 or units sold, he insisted that the +3 was a current product and that there were no plans to stop production.

So it looks as though whatever happens, the +3 saga will continue with us for some time to come. I'm pretty glad about that - I hope you are too!

Anyway, that's hardware covered - let's have a look at what the software houses have ready for our Christmas stockings.

HOT SHOTS

Here's a list of the top contenders for the Christmas number one spot.

ACTIVISION - *DRAGON BREED*

Nice graphics and good movement in this dragonesque horizontal shoot 'em up.

CODEMASTERS - *DIZZY COLLECTION*

You may want to buy Dizzy 4 but this shrewd marketing move means having to pay 9.99 to get it along with all its predecessors.

DOMARK - *BADLANDS*

Sounds like it should be hack and slay game but is in fact yet another race game. And quite a nice one too.

GREMLIN - *LOTUS TURBO/SHADOW OF THE BEAST/ SUPERCARS*

Lotus Turbo Esprit Challenge and Supercars are both great racing games for the sporty type, whilst Shadow of the Beast is a graphically impressive arcade adventure.

MIRRORSOFT - *TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES*

Even if you hate the Turtles, you must admire what is a superb game. Good graphics, good gameplay and an immense licence, mean that this cannot fail but get the Xmas number one slot.

OCEAN - *ROBOCOP II*

The first of Oceans 128K only products this game is a FULL 128K and should sell like hot androids in a close fight with the Turtles for the top slot.

US GOLD - *ESWAT*

US Gold will be putting all their Christmas logs on the festive fire with this, so we should see a good conversion to the Spectrum.

LINE OF FIRE

A conversion of the Williams coin-op, LOF is an Op Thunderbolt type shoot em up which plays well but suffers with some scaling problems when enemies move towards you.

SYSTEM 3 - *NINJA REMIX*

Sold very well over three years ago because of the excellent graphics but could end up a poor replacement for the unfinished Flimbo's Quest.

ZEPELLIN - *ED THE DUCK*

No don't laugh, it actually looks quite good and is like a BBC version of New Zealand Story - could go a storm with young and old alike.

MY CHRISTMAS TOP FIVE

Here's the five games that are worth their weight in Boots vouchers

TURTLES
ROBOCOP II
RICK DANGEROUS II
PANG
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●Garth Sumpter

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AMIGA

Rhe Amiga may well be carving an important niche for itself in the future of games because of its popularity amongst Virtual Reality systems engineers.

It was pretty obvious from the Intertainment conference in New York (see pages 29-31 in this issue) that the Amiga is number one fave machine in this market. The main reason for this is the power and graphics facilities of the Amiga 3000 – several people are specifiying it as a component in their developing VR set-ups, often using two or three 3000's linked together.

All this is very good news for Amiga owners, because ACE's tip for the next hot peripheral is pretty clear – a stereo goggle adaptor to enable true 3D presentation using one of the popular micros. The technology is perfectly simple and such a device could be brought to the market tomorrow at under £300. Because of all the work being done in VR with the Amiga, no prizes for guessing which machine should be first to get the stereoscopic treatment.

*

Been playing *Klax* or *Venus?* Here are a couple of tips, thanks to Sigi Goode of Deakin, Australia..

Klax: Hold down the spacebar and the 4 key on the keyboard in order to skip straight to the last level. This actually makes the game pretty boring for me, but...

Venus: Here are the passwords for this neat insext smashing shoot-em-up (yecch, get that slug off me!...

Ice Wastes: Mantids
Death Valley: Satyrid
Dead City: Cicadas
Wood World: Psyllids
Creeping Swamp: Lycaenid
Kaverns: Pierids

*

Bad news on the CDTV front, unfortunately. First, as you probably already know, the true launch (i.e. readily available in the shops) of this system is now unlikely to be before late Spring 1991 and quite possibly later.

Second, Commodore's promised upgrade for Amiga owners is still a long, long way off. Finally, software support has cooled down considerably in the last few months as software houses, having leaped into development when the machine was first announced, have started dragging their feet now that the machine has been delayed.

Even more ominous was the recent CDTV 'presentation' at the Intertainment conference in New York. Commodore hosted a special lunch for the games industry at the exclusive Marriott Marquis Hotel on Broadway with the express purpose of demonstrating CDTV. In a small room alongside, a small array of what looked like production models sat on tables doing, apparently, very little.

Ex-Atari honcho Nolan Bushnell, now in charge of CDTV development, leapt onto the stage after the second lavish course and announced that he would be telling us about CDTV accompanied by a slide demonstration developed on the machine and running on it.

Well, first it didn't run. Despite having software supremo Gail Wellington at the machine, it kept crashing. Again, and again, and again. Even more suspicious, the ACE correspondent actually saw this CDTV slideshow being created before the presentation – on an Amiga 3000! How sneaky can you get??

In view of all this, the future of CDTV looks, shall we say, temporarily cloudy....

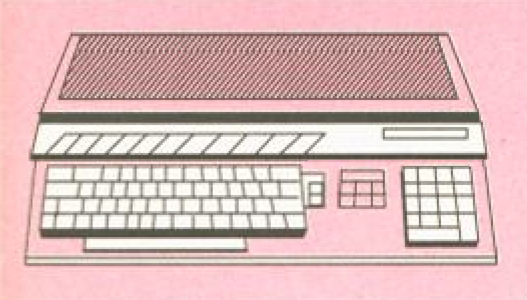
*

Finally, you might like to know that in America, British Amiga software is now regarded as the world's best, according to research carried out amongst users by a US Amiga software distributor. Keep it up, chaps!

See you next month, when we'll have a whole column choc-a-bloc with tips and hints. Yay!

Sam Vickers

ATARI ST



PC software is far too expensive. That's right, it's far too expensive – but this is partly your own fault. You see, the price of software has always been related to the initial cost of the machine it services... that's why C64 software always cost more than the Spectrum equivalent, and it's also why your games cost a good deal more (up to 15 quid more in some cases) than those that your mate buys for his ST or Amiga.

Okay, that bit's not your fault, but what is your fault is that publishers are reluctant to release 'budget' software for the PC like they do for every other machine because so far you've kept what's on offer at a low price at a distance somewhat greater than the length of your arm.

The situation is so ridiculous that Virgin Mastertronic's 16-Blitz budget label actually decided to raise the price of its software in order to make it more attractive. According to the label's product manager Andrew Wright: "PC owners turn up their noses at a game which only costs a fiver, so we've introduced a new range, 16-Blitz Plus, which will feature re-releases of hits at £7.99."

Do you want to read that again? You wouldn't buy it for a fiver so they're now going to charge eight pounds – and it's a good bet that sales will probably increase dramatically.

The most amazing thing is that under these circumstances any of the publishers are bothering to release games at budget prices – but they are, so here's a quick run through of what's come on stream in the last month or so.

One of the larger companies which has only just entered the budget market is Electronic Arts, with its Star Performers range. These are all games which have had a full-price release and are now selling at £9.99. Of the six PC titles available, only three are real stunners – Bard's Tale II, Chuck Yaeger's AFT and Skate Or Die – but that's not a bad strike rate, and picking up those three for the price of one new piece of full-price chart fodder can only be a good thing.

The aforementioned 16 Blitz range also has a new range poised to attack your small change, kicking off with Xenon and Double Dragon: the former (not to be confused with its older brother, Xenon II) was the now infamous Bitmap Brothers' first effort and still provides a good deal of challenging shoot 'em up action – on the subject of Double Dragon however, I think the less that's said the better.

Walsall-based Elite is another of the 'majors' which has decided to unleash some of its back catalogue, kicking off with two TV licences, A Question Of Sport and Mike Read's Pop Quiz. Actually these are basically the same game, albeit with different questions – and they're actually a little bit on the expensive side at a tenner apiece – but if you want a little family fun, pick the one whose subject matter most suits your preference and kill some time showing off your amazing wealth of trivial knowledge.

The trouble with budget software though is that it's something of a double-edged sword. If games drop in value too quickly, then it's bound to damage their sales when they originally appear as people won't mind waiting a little while to get them at one third of the price. If however, the low price release is delayed for too long then the games will look so out of date that we'll remain in exactly the same situation as we're in at the moment with games buyers looking down with contempt on anything that costs less than 20 pounds.

Personally, I'm looking forward to the day when Populous, Midwinter and the likes become affordable to every PC gamesplayer – and the rise of a strong market for budget software can only help to bring this day a little closer. So, to do your bit, next time you see a gift horse, try to hold back for just a little while before examining its teeth – who knows, you may even end up with a few classics to add to your collection.

● **Ciaran Brennan**

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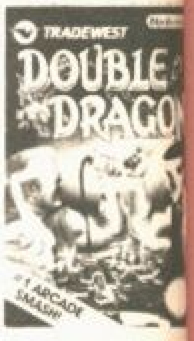

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PC ENGINE

You know how it is. On every machine there are games that are simply streets ahead of the rest. Jim Douglas, one-time editor of Sinclair User and now Assistant Editor of ACE nominates Zub on the Spectrum as one such title. Steve Cooke still swears by Spannerman on the Camputers Lynx (easy, really – there were hardly any other games for it, poor fellow). Rik Haynes swears by Armalite on the C64. For the Amiga, CU Amiga games expert Mark Patterson nominates Midwinter...but what about the PC Engine, eh? Which are the games you've just GOT to have??

Since Christmas is coming, here's my own personal list of the titles that - if you haven't already got them – you should be putting at the top of your list. I've divided them into categories and, of course, these are all personal favourites. Yours may be different, in which case why not write in to me c/o ACE and let me know your nominations?

Here goes:.

SPORTS SIMULATIONS

Formation Soccer

This is the only football game to appear on the Engine. The game contains loads of features such as volleys, overhead kicks, and headers, as well as all the usual corners and penalty shoot outs. It also contains an option to let up to four players play at the same time. All this displayed on vertically scrolling 3D.

World Court Tennis

This, like footy, is the only game of its type on the grey market. It sports an amazing control method and brilliant graphics. Also like football, it has a multiplayer option which is great fun. Arguably the best tennis simulation on any console or computer.

SHOOT EM UPS

R-Type 1+2

R-Type 1 contains the first four levels of the arcade while *R-Type 2* contains the latter stages. In *R-Type* (just in case you've been asleep for the last year or two) you fly your R9 fighter against the evil Bydo empire. The two cards feature arcade perfect graphics without a flicker in sight, even when the action is at its hottest.

Ordyne

This game had a massive cult following when it hit the arcades in 1988. The game itself has been accurately translated onto the Engine and features all the normal cute end of level baddies and all the screen clearing power-ups. All this is nothing new, but *Ordyne* is done in such a neat way that it is a must. The graphics are brilliant, the game plays even better.Buy it!

ARCADE

Devil Crash

This is the follow up to *Alien Crush* and I can truthfully say that this is better than the original. Its a superb pinball simulation featuring great gameplay, marvellous table graphics, hard goth rock soundtracks and loads of surprises and bonus screens. A must for all Engine owners, even if you never considered going near a pinball table before.

Splatterhouse

A few years ago this game was doing its time in the arcades. Its was a huge hit. The secret of its success was the horrific and gory graphics. The game has now been ported over to the Engine and it has lost none of its appeal over the last few years. The graphics appear to be spruced up a bit from the arcade original, and the gameplay has lost none of its . This unfortunately is the downfall of the game as you are given about 6 continues, and unless you resist the urge to keep on continuing you will soon find yourself finishing the game. If you can resist the urge you will have bought a classic game.

Dungeon Explorer

Five players can simultaneously take part in this brilliant Gauntlet style game. You try to battle through 13 (unlucky) levels each crawling with every type of horrible creature available. The graphics and SFX bring out the atmosphere. Explorer just oozes playability, and if you get 5 people playing at one time you have a whole new perspective to the game.

These are only my opinions on which are the best Engine games around at the minute. There are naturally lots more classic games about and if anyone has a view or load of tips about them let me know:

AND ONE FOR THE STOCKING

One the best peripherals available for the PC Engine is the 5 player adapter, and the extra joypads. This enables up to 5 players to be able to play one game at the same time. This increases the number of friends you have, and makes the game more fun, therefore increasing the lastibility.

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GAMEBOY

Gameboy tips are go! This month, Spiderman seems to be posing a lot of problems for you Gameboy fiends.

Most people seem to have put Batman to one side in favour of this equally tricky little cartridge. Certainly judging by the amount of pleas for help we receive each month, you folks need some help with it.

MYSTERIO AND THE END-OF-LEVEL-GANG

Your first area of real difficulty will probably be on the sixth screen in. Here, you must watch the patterns of Mysterio's bombs. They'll give away his location, allowing you enough time to position yourself in a prime strike point.

Actually doing battle with Mysterio is far from easy. he doesn't sit still for long. Take note of his movement pattern, and attack when he's dropping down. Always remember to avoid that awful gas.

The end of level bosses can withstand spinning web attacks with relatively little difficulty. Instead, opt for a straight fist fight. There's no point wasting your webs when good old fashioned punching will do the job just as well.

General Tips:

When fighting Mysterio, dodge the explosions by moving to the right of the screen. Then duck. Wait for him to appear, hit him three times, and he should konk out.

THE HOBGOBLIN

Track down the Hobgoblin at the top of a skyscraper. Climb to the top of the building carefully avoiding those sneaky open windows. There's only one window that you can climb through, so keep looking.

Once atop the roof, you must battle the Hobgoblin's henchmen. They're really in their element here, and the action becomes a lot tougher. This is where to use your webs. Take out the henchmen and Swing your way across the rooftops towards the Hobgoblin's domain.

When Mr H appears, you know you're in for a fight. Dodge the jack-o-lanterns or your strength will be depleted, and you'll be in no fit state to fight.

The best policy to defeat the Goblin is to watch his movement pattern and kick him in the back as he turns away from you.

GENERAL TIPS:

The hobgoblin's battle is highly complicated. Head for the upper ledge and keep on the right hand side. Crouch down and start kicking until the bad guy drops under the ledge . Once he emerges from the bottom right, you can intercept him with a number of well-placed kicks.

THE SCORPION

Deep underground you'll encounter the Scorpion. His henchmen appear out of nowhere, so you've got to keep your wits about you at all times.

To move around in the subways, you can ride the tube trains, but you should be aware that the chances of an abush are expremely high.

The Scorpion hemself, is equipped with a large and deadly tail (hence the name). Once his tail has flicked out, run towards the Scorpion and plant a punch on him, then run back again. This way you can deplete his strength without incurring any hit points on yourself.

Another method of attack which proves sucesfull for more sprightly players is to leap over and around the Scorpion, and then give him a kick in the knee from behind.

That shoould be more than enough to keep you going for the moment. Any further problems and you'll ust have to rely on your Spidey-sense to help you out.

GENERAL TIPS:

A successful battle with the Scorpion is impossible inless you can perfect buth your punching and kicking action. Continual punching will inflict hit points, since he's none too bright and will wander directly into the blows, but you must back off and keep him at bay with a supressing fire of webs, lest his tail catches you in the crotch.

●Jim Douglas

AMSTRAD CPC

Who said that the 8-bit computers are dead? I've just seen a couple of games that reaffirm my faith in the ol' CPC...

A SHADOW OF ITS FORMER SELF?

Well, who would have thought it! Amstrad owners may have heard about Gremlin Graphics' conversion of the Psygnosis game, *The Shadow of the Beast*, and thought "Lovely idea, but it'll never work." - I know I did. The Amiga version boasted gorgeous smooth-scrolling graphics and atmospheric sound, while the Amstrad version boasts... can it be true?... gorgeous smooth-scrolling graphics and atmospheric sound too!

Admittedly, there have been some compromises, such as the screen being a little small and the use of only four colours for the graphics, but to compensate the slightly shallow gameplay of the original has been improved, although you are still annoyingly plonked right back at the beginning if you die. It's not really my place to go about giving ACE ratings, but if I reviewed it I'd score it somewhere in the upper 800s. Congratulations to all at Gremlin!

KICKIN' ASS

Remember *Kick Off* on the Amstrad? Pretty dismal, wasn't it? Thank goodness Anco have totally revamped the the sequel, *Kick Off 2*. The graphics no longer look like direct Speccy ports and the playability is so good it hurts! The computer is a tough opponent, but the game is at its best in two-player mode. I bet you'll still be loading this up in a year or two's time so that you and your mate can have a game.

IN THE NAVY...

Currently hitting cinema screens Stateside and due here in the near future is a Rambo-esque big-budget movie called *Navy Seals*, starring Charlie Sheen, star of *Wall Street* and *Platoon*, and Michael Biehn, star of *Aliens* and *The Abyss* (where he played *another* Navy Seal. Incidentally, I thought The Abyss was a great film, ending aside, and the effects for the alien water tentacle were stunning - see it on video if you don't know what I'm on about!). Eminently suitable for a computer game, you may think, and sure enough here it is, thanks to those masters of the film tie-in, Ocean.

I managed to have a quick sneak preview of the game on the GX4000 console, and technically it's looked very nice; smooth scrolling in all directions and large colourful sprites with excellent animation. However, it seemed pretty tough - one shot is all it takes to lose a life and there's a heck of a lot of flak flying about. Hopefully you'll see the full ACE review soon - look out for it!

HOLY *BATMAN* TIPS

Seeing that this smashing game has just been released in Ocean's *Hollywood Collection*, it seems like the right time to let you in on a great little cheat to let you skip levels. It's simple (and especially easy to remember if you're a Robocop fan) - just hold down keys 'E', 'D','2','0','9' all together at any time during the game. And for any Speccy owners who happen to be reading, you may be interested to know that this cheat will also work on your machines. Thanks to Steven Prescott of Wigan for that one.

***TURRICAN* TOO TOUGH?**

Too blummin' right, it is! Great game, though. Wouldn't it be nice to have an extra life or, even better, infinite credits? What's that, Richard Owens of Edinburgh, just move to the far left at the start of the game and jump, and I can have both? Well, thank you!

Christmas is here again. It's been a great year for Amstrad fans, what with the release of two new computers and the console, and 1991 looks like being an even better, especially now that cartridge support is beginning to take off.

Amstrad recently announced that their profits are down for the second time in two years, with turnover dropping from £626 million to £577 million and pre-tax profit dropping from £76 million to £44 million. But take heart, because I think the new products should help them well on the way to recovery.

Enough doom and gloom - now is the time for good cheer. Don't drink and eat too much this Chrissy and I'll see you hale and hearty in the New Year. Bye!

● David Upchurch

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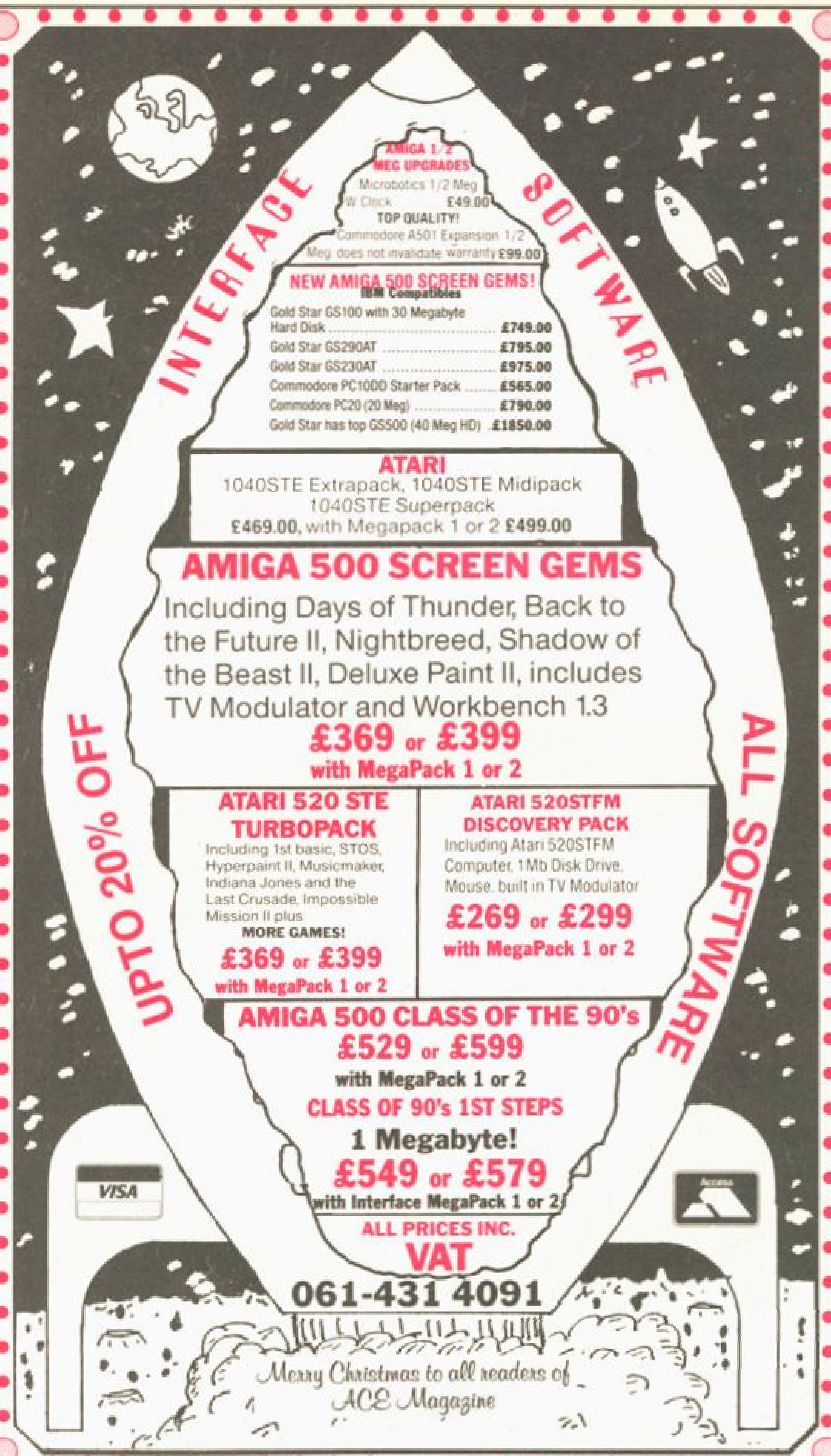

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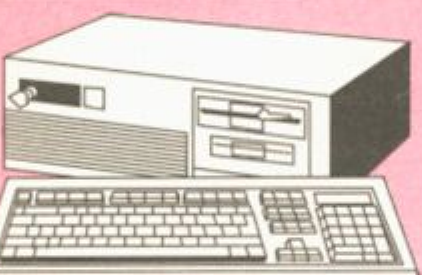

Who'd have thought it? Who'd have guessed that in this post-Thatcher, money-conscious, I'm alright Jack, every man for himself era that there would still be a group of philanthropic programmers out there who want nothing more than to give you their software for absolutely nothing!

Well, actually it isn't quite like that, but the ever-growing range of Shareware and Public Domain software costs far less than games that come in fancy boxes filled with trinkets and tea towels - and if you look hard enough you may even find some that put their more expensive counterparts to shame.

Briefly, the Public Domain is made up of programs which have been made available by their developers for any number of reasons: it can come from back room enthusiasts who couldn't get their wares published any other way, or even from major publishers who put out demos of their latest games as another marketing tool. Shareware, on the other hand, is a sort of `try before you buy' scheme where individual programmers or small development teams circulate cut-down versions of their creations (which can be anything from simple bat and ball games to expanded memory managers) and allow the user to get to grips with them at their leisure. If you like the program you then register and receive the full thing - if not, you simply don't bother.

Either way, the initial outlay is usually little more than the price of the disk it comes on (or, if you log on to a bulletin board you can even save those few shillings by simply downloading the many programs available through that channel).

So much for the theory, but how do you find your way into this vast and unexplored silicon treasure chest? The best way is to scour the small ads in the back pages of this very magazine

Even if an ad only offers one particular program, it's a fair bet that the person offering it has access to a whole host of others. A quick call will usually result in a catalogue winging its way towards you and the rest is simple. Following this very method, I called up the Public Domain Software Library (fiendishly cryptic name I know, but somehow I thought that this could just be the type of place I was looking for). Within a matter of days I was the proud possessor of a range of games from Wizard Games, a Scottish programming team.

For roughly nine pounds I'd got my hands on seven programs, with content ranging from a `psychedelic' maze game (pretty poor actually) to a superb soccer game called... wait for it, The Soccer Game.

Although it's entirely text-based The Soccer Game is compulsive and realistic enough to keep any true fan stuck to their keyboard in a vain effort to gain promotion.

Like the rest of the Wizard programs, The Soccer Game is Shareware: this version only allows the budding manager two seasons to get it right, but if you want to play longer than that (which is more or less compulsory for anyone who catches the bug) and to take advantage of the `save and load' facilities, then you'll have to pay the £12 registration fee.

Although the Wizard disks only actually yielded two or three games that you'd bother to play twice, it still worked out as reasonable value for money - mostly because of The Soccer Game, it must be said. But if you came up with something as good as that every time you dipped into the Public Domain then it would become a more than worthwhile hobby.

For Local clubs who will have PD Libraries to hand contact The British Association of Computer Clubs, 31 Queens Crescent, Clapham, Beds. MK41 6DB.

Alternatively, if you're one of those sprocket-heads who's equipped with a modem (and knows how to use it) then you could contact one of the following bulletin boards.

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3) Which colour is Arnie in Car-Vup
a) Red
b) Blue
c) Beige

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HOT OFF THE SHELF

"Oh thanks, Gran! Just the game I've always wanted!" (Thinks: Oh no, what's this? Why didn't I show her *Hot Off The Shelf,* then I might have got something *really* good).

To celebrate Xmas the listing has been fully revamped, and now includes all the highest-rated titles featured in ACE over the past three months, as well as older but essential buys. All you see here should be available from your local dealer now.

BUCK ROGERS: COUNTDOWN TO DOOMSDAY

SSI/US Gold ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £TBA ● C64 £TBA

The year is 2456, and Buck Rogers, tactical genius and fearless defender of freedom, is defrosted from cryogenic suspension to help lead rebels on a ravaged Earth to victory and freedom from a tyrannical government. An RPG with similarities to the SSI *AD&D* games, the action is viewed in familiar pseudo-3D. All interaction is menu driven, with selections made by clicking the mouse. The number of locations are many and varied, and most are introduced by an attractive picture. Fans of this genre should be more than happy with this, and the space setting makes a welcome change from the usual medieval fantasy.

★ ACE RATING 885 ON AMIGA

CAPTIVE

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST/E £24.99 ● PC £29.99

Another in the ever expanding number of RPGs portrayed using first-person perspective. Captive, written by veteran programmer Tony Crowther, pits you against hordes of rampaging aliens, with nothing to defend you but a briefcase. This briefcase, however, contains a computer giving you remote control over a four-droid team with which you must free yourself from the fortress where you are imprisoned . Excellent bitmapped graphics, atmospheric real-time stereo sound and a total of 65000 levels to explore place *Captive* very much in the ACE-rated category.

★ ACE RATING 930 ON AMIGA

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

FTL/Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £TBA

The long awaited sequel to *Dungeon Master*. If you have already played through the first program you can use your existing characters, otherwise there is another hall of mirrors you can select from. Chaos has a similar feel to *Dungeon Master*, but is much tougher. There are also some new features thrown in, like a character editor and help oracle (very handy). If you haven't played *Dungeon Master* then play that first before making a definite date with this game.

★ ACE RATING 945 ON ATARI ST

COVERT ACTION

Microprose ● PC £39.99

Yet another secret agent game! You play Max Remington, ex-CIA man, who is now earning a crust as a undercover investigator. However, Max is known to waive the fee for the President of the United States. On offer are four skill levels, three mission areas, three crime types and over a dozen enemy operatives to contend with. As you would expect from Microprose there's a wealth of detail and the tasks on offer are going to require many months of work to crack. Go to it, Max.

★ ACE RATING 902 ON IBM PC

CORPORATION

Core Design ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £29.99

This role-playing cybernetic extravaganza from CORE pushes the limits of previous RPG's just that bit further. *Corporation* is a 3-D exploration, puzzle-orientated arcade combat game (?) in the mould made traditional by the original Dungeon Master RPG. Your objective is to find and remove an embryo belonging to the ultimate biogenetic killing machine, bred by the UCC Corp. Light-source shaded raphics and sound of film-like quality, along with excellent playability and an intuitive control method all contributed in pushing *Corporation* over the 900 mark.

★ ACE RATING 945 ON AMIGA

DAMOCLES

Novagen ● Atari ST £24.95 ● Amiga £24.95 ● PC £TBA

This unusual combination of flight sim and adventure game, and sequel to the well-received *Mercenary*, has been in development for a couple of years now, but the resulting game has been worth the wait. The wireframe graphics of the original game have been replaced by solid 3D vector graphics, but they are just as fast. There are now nine planets to explore instead of one city, so there is plenty of long term challenge here.

★ ACE RATING 935 ON ATARI ST

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.99 ● Amiga £29.99 ● PC £39.99

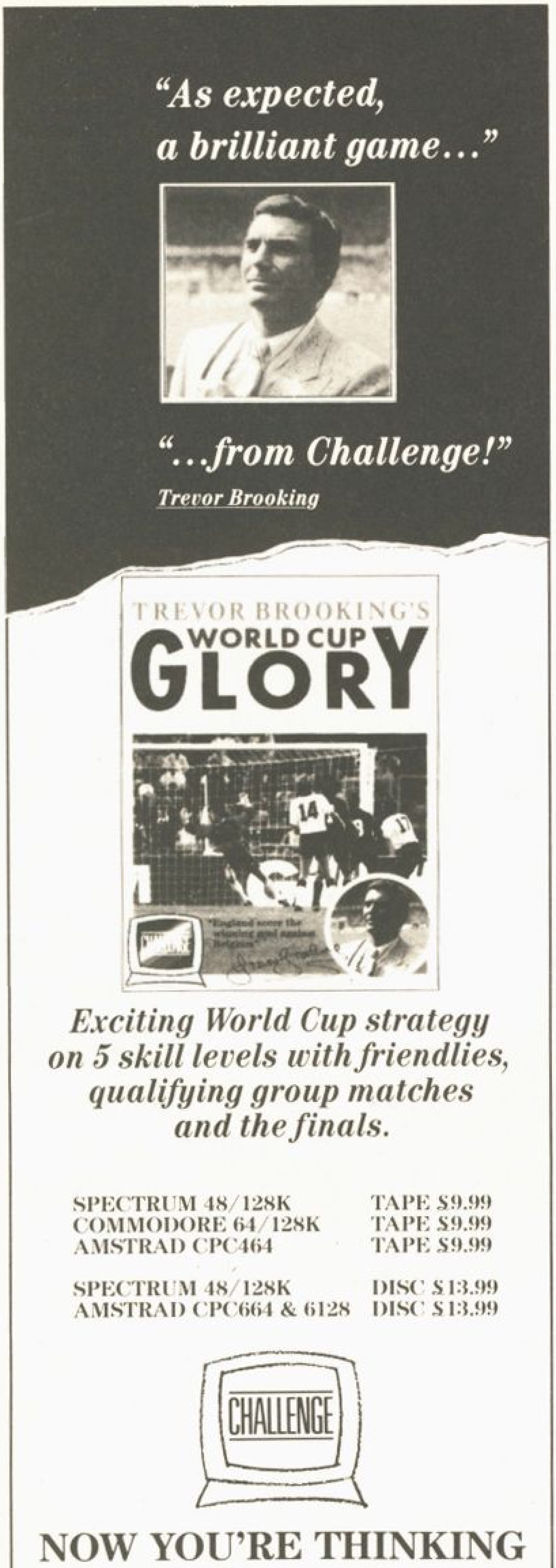
A program that could well be described as the Flight Simulator's Flight Simulator. The PC version has enjoyed much success since its launca year ago, and now it's brothers on the ST and Amiga look set to do the same. The sim is based around the much talked about (or perhaps that be whispered about) Stealth Fighter. It boasts four huge sceanrios with hundreds of missions, and plenty of detail. If you are looking for the definitive flight sim, then you can't go far wrong with this one.

★ ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC

GOLD OF THE AZTECS

US Gold ● Amiga £TBA ● Atari ST £TBA ● PC £TBA

Oh yes, very Indy Jones! A graphically-slick arcade adventure that casts you in the role of Bret Conrad, ex-US Special Forces and one-time CIA agent. Hacking through the jungle in pursuit of a lost Aztec tomb filled with gold, you must evade the clutches of savage pygmy headhunters, marauding elephants and innumerable booby-traps. Only those with quick-wits and fast-reactions need apply. The animation on the large, finely-drawn, sprites is incredible - Bret seems able to do anything! There's enough



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tension and excitement here to satisfy any arcade adventure freak.

★ **ACE RATING 868 ON AMIGA**

HARPOON

Mirrorsoft/PSS ● PC £29.99

Quite simply the best naval simulation to be released for the General Public. The battleset that comes with the game deals with East-West conflict in the North Sea, but other battlesets will be available soon. A clever system of three map types is used to effectively manage each mission. The nice thing about *Harpoon* is that the computer takes care of all the boring mechanics, allowing you to concentrate on broad tactics. A must buy for anyone interested in modern navel warfare.

★ **ACE RATING 940 ON IBM PC**

THE IMMORTAL

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99

Nothing new in the plot department, unfortunately. Old wizard...enter dungeon...defeat monsters...avoid traps...solve puzzles...rescue Grand Wizard...etc,etc. However, the presentation is something else. An isometric-3D angle is used to view the events, and your character moves around it freely, combating monsters and so on. Every move is beautifully animated. There are only 50 locations to visit, but every one is going to take a lot of work to puzzle through. **WARNING!** - this program only works on 1Mb machines!

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON ATARI ST**

INDIANAPOLIS 500

Electronic Arts ● PC £24.95 ● Amiga £24.95

The ultimate racing game. *Indy 500* uses state of the art solid vector graphics which really add something to the high speed action. As in Activision's *Bomber* there are a variety of out-of-cockpit views to select from. the realistic handling of the cars will have you coming back to this game time and time again.

★ **ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC**

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE

Gremlin Graphics ● 16-bit formats £24.99 ● 8-bit formats £10.99

Remember *Pit Stop II*? Gremlin obviously do, because this game employs a similar split-screen effect as that ageing classic to allow two players to race against each other at the same time. This, and the fact that the 3D effect actually does convince you that you're travelling at the speed on your meter, puts Lotus way ahead of the rest of the pack. With 32 tracks, 3 difficulty levels and the option to choose between automatic and manual gears, this is one racing game with fair a bit of mileage.

★ **ACE RATING 875 ON AMIGA**

MIDWINTER

Microprose ● Atari ST £29.99 ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £TBA

The latest mega hit from top programmer Mike Singleton, creator of *Lords of Midnight*. The game is set on a frozen island in the future. Your task is to recruit members of the Peace Force to fight off General Masters' invasion force. This is done by managing people and resources via a series of Fractal Maps and menus. The game has disappointing sound, but nice 3D graphics, and enough solid gameplay to keep you going for months.

★ **ACE RATING 948 ON ATARI ST**

MYTH

System 3 ● 8-bit formats £8.99cs/£14.99dk

The game that pushes the C64 and Spectrum further than they have ever been before. Fight your way through several time zones to reach the ultimate confrontation with the god Dameron. The game is captivating not only because of it's size and depth but also because of the superbly animated sprites and sheer playability.

★ **ACE RATING 925 ON C64**

OPERATION STEALTH

US Gold ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99

One of our 'planes is missing in this latest game from Delphine Software. As John Glames, you have to use all your wit and ingenuity to recover a Stealth Bomber hijacked from a US Airbase before the KGB get their hands on it. This Sierra Online style game is similar to Delphine's previous game, *Future Wars*, with all interaction effected by simply pointing and clicking the mouse. The graphics and animation are very entertaining, although sound is a little disappointing, and the game task should keep you going for a long while.

★ **ACE RATING 910 ON AMIGA**

POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

★ ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA

RICK DANGEROUS 2

Microstyle ● 16-bit formats £24.99 ● 8-bit formats £9.99cs/£14.99dk

After his Indy-inspired adventures in the prequel, Rick looks to the stars and dons leotard and blond quiff for his second run-in with the Fat Man. Set over five levels, the game generously allows the player to take on the first four in any order. The graphics and sounds are nice, but not stunning. With platform games playability is everything, and *RD2* has it in buckets.

★ ACE RATING 870 ON ATARI ST

ACE CLASSICS!

All the games in HOT OFF THE SHELF – this month's software selection – have been released in the last few months and should be readily available from your local dealer or by mail-order. We've chosen the titles carefully to ensure that, if one should take your fancy, it ought to be readily available. Don't forget that most dealers will be happy to order titles for you if they haven't got them in stock.

However, the truly discerning player knows full well that some of the greatest games of all time are not generally available in the shops. ACE is compiling a listing of History's Greatest Games – but we've hit a few snags. Our main problem has been that software houses tend not to keep records on their older games and we have still a lot of detective work to do to locate stocks (if they exist) of older titles. However, we do hope to have the listing ready for the New Year – our apologies for the delay.

SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ● Amiga £TBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World, full to the brim with new quests. A rollicking good yarn well told and - hard to believe we know - actually *better* than *Ultima VI*.

★ ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC

SILENT SERVICE II

Microprose ● PC £39.99

This sequel from the reigning masters of simulations, Microprose, gives you the chance to live the life of a US Submarine Officer, fighting the Japanese in the Pacific during WWII. Animated graphics portray the conflict in startling realism - each enemy ship is taken from a digitised photograph - and the vital data displays are clear and easy to read. With a huge array of options and four distinct games scenarios to select, this a game that will keep sim fans happy for many long hours. One minor niggle is the large amount of disk access, although the option to shut down extraneous animation scenes reduces this.

★ ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC

SIMULCRA

Microstyle ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99

In the future, physical conflict is a thing of the past, with all wars being fought in Cyberspace. However, a virus has caused the simulated battles to spill into 'true' reality. You must enter the 'battle matrix', destroy the rampaging simulcraft and ultimately the matrix itself. Although basically a shoot-'em-up, with the usual variety of add-ons to pick up, Simulcra's claim to fame is the incredible rotating patchwork 3D world where the combat takes place. Fast and furious action, excellent aesthetics and a slight strategy element make this one of the best games of the year.

★ ACE RATING 936 ON ATARI ST

TEAM YANKEE

Empire International ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The interesting use of 3D bit-mapped graphics to depict the action rather than the expected

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polygons pays off in this involving tank war simulation. Although they get a little blocky close-up, this is more than compensated for by their speed and detail (half the trick is being able to correctly identify your own vehicles and not fire on them!). You control a four tank platoon, which you can switch between with ease, on a wide range of missions. Early accessibility but mounting in complexity as you gain experience make this a perfect purchase for any strategist from novice to master.

★ **ACE RATING 893 ON AMIGA**

THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Lucasfilm ● Atari ST £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● PC £24.99dk

World War II air combat relived in this superlative flight sim. You have the opportunity to fly a variety of WWII craft from the Spitfire to the Hurricane. A neat option is the camera which records your flight and can be replayed to assess your performance. You can also fly on both sides! Great game on all available formats, but particularly recommended for PC owners – gameplay of this stature on the PC is rare.

★ **ACE RATING 933 ON IBM PC**

VAXINE

US Gold ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST/E £19.99 ● PC £24.99

Bizarre! Set inside the human body, you have to protect your host's vital cells from attack by rampaging viruses. Each virus is represented by a coloured bouncing ball. You must skim of the rapidly scrolling checkerboard tissuescape, hunt down the attacking cells, and zap them with antidote of the same colour as the viruses. Far more intellectually-demanding than it might at first appear, *Vaxine* is a truly original game with gorgeous ray-traced graphics that tests both your reflexes and your brain.

★ **ACE RATING 905 ON ATARI ST**

WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but any sense of deja vu is completely dispelled by the use of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface gloss. Sadly only on PC at the moment, and then best appreciated on the higher speed models.

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WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, teeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. All adventure fans kneel and pray - an essential buy.

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An epic quest through the five Xiphon Universes wracked by civil war, you play a space trader seeking the sixth central Universe and a possible solution to the turmoil (plus hefty wadges of cash into the bargain). Although initially smacking of the classic Elite, *Xiphos* differs in that it can appeal to those looking for a long-term task and those looking for a straight blast, due to the 'Raid' mode. With top-notch 3D polygon graphics and atmospheric sound, *Xiphos*' only real failing is its slight lack of originality.

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ULTIMA VI

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★ **ACE RATING 950 ON IBM PC**

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Wings of Death **(New)**	16.99	16.99
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ACE 08/90

ACE DIARY

DECEMBER

2 – 8 DECEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

Accolade: Stratego (PC £24.99). Military board game conversion.

US Gold: Indy Double Pack (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). Last Crusade plus Zak McCracken in a single box. Nightshift (Amiga, ST £24.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Do your stint at the IML factory and earn a fortune. Crimewave (Amiga, ST, PC £24.99) Powercrash (PC £29.99). Coin-op compilation comprising Outrun, Strider, Forgotten World, Thunderblade and Last Duel) Strider II - No Limits, No Mercy (C64, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Follow up to the Capcom coin-op.

Domark: Hard Drivin' II (ST, Amiga £24.99; PC £29.99). Four more circuits, faster action and a track editor to design your own stunt driving.

Palace: Dragon's Breath (PC £29.99)

Image Works: Speedball 2 (Amiga £24.99). Bitmap Brothers' vision of an intergalactic sporting life.

Mindscape: Ultimate Ride (Amiga, ST £24.99). Days of Thunder (Spectrum, C64 tape £9.99 disk £14.99). From the film; in fact, quite possibly substantially better than the film. Life and Death (ST, £24.99). Budding brain surgeons can test their surgical skills here. 4D Sports Driving (PC £29.99)

Electronic Arts: Dragon Wars (Amiga £24.99) Lord of the Rings (PC £29.99). Bard's Tale III (PC £29.99). New format for well-established cult role-player.

Ocean: Battle Command (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). Follow up to Carrier Command.

Virgin: Aerial Assault (Sega Master System £29.99) Ultima IV (Sega Master System £39.99). Popular strategy game in surprise console appearance. World Cup Italia 90 (Sega Master System £TBA) Columns (Sega Master System £29.99)

Novagen: Damocles Mission Disk 1 (ST, Amiga £9.99). More planets, more flights, more objects. Needs original Damocles to run.

Saturday 8
Computer Shopper show, Wembley Exhibition Centre. Loadsa bargains in the world of games, add-ons (music, graphics, DTP, you name it) and hardware.
Sunday 9
National Day, Tanzania.
Last day of the Computer Shopper show (see above for details).
Monday 10
End of the grouse shooting season.
Tuesday 11
Wednesday 12
National Day, Kenya.
Thursday 13
Friday 14

9-14 DECEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

Cinemaware: It Came from the Desert (PC £34.99). Twin Peaks with giant ants. Spectrum Holobyte: Flight of the Intruder (Amiga, ST £29.99). Flight sim base d on various aircraft in Vietnam.

Electronic Arts: Zany Golf (Sega Megadrive £39.99) John Madden's American Football (Sega Megadrive £39.99). American Footie action game created in fine detail. Battle Squadron (Sega Megadrive £39.99) Imperium (PC £29.99). Skulduggery and intrigue in the Roman Empire.

US Gold: Dragonstrike (C64 disk only £14.99) Sega Master Mix (Amiga, ST £24.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Compilation.

Accolade: Star Control (Spectrum, C64, CPC £10.99 tape, £16.99 disk)

Virgin: Populous (Sega Megadrive £39.99). Bullfrog's civilisation creator nails the lie that consoles are only good for arcade games. Budokan (Sega Megadrive £39.99). Get your kicks from a series of martial arts tests. World Cup Italia 90 (Sega Megadrive £29.99). Better late than never, I guess. Ghostbusters (Sega Megadrive £34.99)

Dinamic: Narco Police (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99, CPC tape £9.99, disk £14.99). Programmed by development team 'on the spot' in South America, narcotics squad against evil, etc, drug barons.

Ocean: NARC (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £10.99, disk £15.99). Total Recall (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99, Spectrum, C64, CPC tape £10.99, disk £15.99). Beefcake shoot 'em up, much like its licensed character.

Don't forget!

Starting next month, ACE will always be on sale on 8th of every month!

Saturday 15
All Formats Computer show, New Horticultural Halls, London SW1. Cut-price hardware, software and peripherals.
Sunday 16
Monday 17
Tuesday 18
Death penalty for murder formally abolished in Britain on this day in 1969.
Wednesday 19
Thursday 20
Friday 21

15-21 DECEMBER SOFTWARE RELEASES

If the software houses haven't got their products in the shops by now, it's a safe bet you won't see them until after Christmas. As far as publishing goes, you can consider the industry closed for the next fortnight.

Saturday 22
Shortest day of the year today. Lie in and you'll miss it ... Speed limit of 70 mph was introduced in Britain on this day in 1965.
Sunday 23
Monday 24
Christmas Eve. Last minute dash round shops for presents.
Tuesday 25
Christmas Day. Open presents, eat turkey, watch TV film, fall asleep.
Wednesday 26
Boxing Day (Bank Holiday)
Thursday 27
Friday 28
Saturday 29
Sunday 30
Monday 31
New Year's Eve

JANUARY 1991

Tuesday 1
New Year's Day (Bank Holiday); National Day, Cuba; National Day, Sudan; National Day, Haiti. Britain became a member of the EEC on this day in 1973.
Wednesday 2
Thursday 3
Friday 4
National Day, Burma
Saturday 5

22 DEC – 5 JAN SOFTWARE RELEASES

Thalion: Enchanted Land (ST £24.99). Cutesy runaround game.

Ocean: Sim Earth (PC £29.99, Apple Mac £TBA). Maxis's follow-up to Sim City on a massive scale.

Psygnosis: Carthage (ST £24.99). Arcade/strategy game set in the Carthage of the Roman Empire.

Rainbird: Elite Plus (PC) Updated version of the classic trading game which takes account of all those VGA monitors out there.

Micro Style: War Jeep (ST, Amiga £24.99)

PSS: Champion of the Raj (Amiga, ST, PC £24.99) Territorial strategy game based in 19th century India.

PSS: Harpoon (Amiga £29.99)

Planning an event?

Let the Diary Editor know! Telephone Christina on 081 446 4813

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THERE'S ONE NEAR YOU!

ACE DEALS

Our regular column highlighting special offers around the country. Check it out before you head off to the shops for your Xmas splash out...

They're here, they're there, they're every-bloomin'-where. Like Santa Claus, the Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles have that uncanny ability to be in more than one place at once.

At any rate, during December, the Turtles will be much in evidence, notably at **Software Circus** in The Plaza in London's Oxford Street on December 3, where they will be making a personal appearance. Then on December 18, the Turtles will be strolling into the brand new **Microbyte** outlet in the Meadow Hall centre in Sheffield.

Liverpool's **City Software** also has a Turtle extravaganza planned for December so if you live in the Liverpool area, look out for more details.

City Software is also stocking up with lots of Christmas present ideas, with special accessory gift packs, such as computer cleaning kits, or blank disks, disk boxes and mouse mats in a single package. Could be just the thing for the computer owner who already has everything.

Also at **City Software**, look out for special offers on Amiga second disk drives and half megabyte memory upgrades. Staying with the Amiga, all **Microbyte** stores are giving away a free demo disk with any Amiga purchase worth over £12.50. Contents of the free disks vary, but most include demos of brand new and forthcoming games for the machine.

And if you're wondering where to do your Christmas shopping, there are new computer games shops popping up all over the place. There are brand new **Virgin Games Centres** opening in the first week of this month in Oxford (in the Westgate Centre) and Kingston upon Thames (at 64-66 Clarence Street). In the Cardiff Service Centre on Crichton Street, the new Virgin Megastore has a Games Centre section within it - should also be open by the time you read this.

Microbyte also has three new shops - in Sheffield, as detailed above; at 129 St George's Walk, St John's Centre, Liverpool, and Friargate Walk in St George's Centre, Preston. Microbyte promises there will be sales and special offers at all three new stores, so if you live nearby, drop in and pick up a bargain or two.

There are also two new shops in the **Computer Store** chain: in the Broadmarsh Centre in Nottingham, and at Pinstone Street, Sheffield. Actress Sally Ann Matthews (Jenny Bradley in Coronation Street, and a self-confessed Sega nut) will be making a personal appearance at the Sheffield outlet sometime soon - check with the store for details.

WHERE TO LOOK FOR THEM

City Software is on Lime Street, Liverpool.

There are **Microbyte** stores in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham; Kirkgate, Wakefield; the Metro Centre, Gateshead; the Greenmarket, Newcastle Upon Tyne; the Kirkgate Centre, Bradford; the Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham; the County Arcade, Leeds; Pasture Road, Goole; Meadow Hall Centre, Sheffield; St John's Centre, Liverpool, and St George's Centre, Preston.

Virgin has its **Games Centre** outlets on London's Oxford Street (at Marble Arch, within the Megastore, and at no 100), Bristol, Kingston and Oxford, and also in Megastores in Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow (at Union St and Argyle St), Leeds, and Nottingham.

Both **Software Circus** outlets are in London's West End; one in The Plaza, Oxford Street, the other at 282, High Holborn, London WC1.

The **Computer Store** chain is based in Yorkshire, with shops at Printing Office St, Doncaster; Ivegate, Bradford; Trinity St Arcade, Leeds; Market Place, Huddersfield; Westmoreland St, Wakefield; St Sampson's Square, York; The Woolshops, Halifax; Market St, Barnsley; High Street, Scunthorpe; Pinstone Street, Sheffield, and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham.

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock. Although we do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at the time of going to press, ACE cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

Attention dealers! Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc, a secret. Tell us at ACE and we'll tell everybody else.

SHOP WATCH!

Software seller Dirk Longhorn reckons that Nintendo could be getting their act together in the UK in a big way...

It was way back in 1987 when the Sega and Nintendo consoles were unveiled in this country: I thought at the time that, of the two, the Sega was by far the most attractive and we duly stocked the system as soon as it was available. As the range of titles grew, the more popular the machine became, and the following Christmas (1988) the Sega system once again cleaned up by being the only console to be stocked by many computer stores (ourselves included)

During 1989, however, the whisper was that Nintendo were going to do to this country what they had done to america (i.e. totally infiltrate teen and pre-teen culture. We looked again at the system; we looked at the incredibly high price of what was available; we looked at each other. 'Nah! It'll never happen over here,' we said.

Nevertheless, we still decided to stock the machine and the associated software; if for no other reason than to offer it as an alternative to the getting-more-unreliable-by-the-tear home computers. While not exactly selling like the proverbial 'magazine on a disk' (that's just Dirk being sarcastic – I hope none of you have subscribed to Rampage), it did sell in respectable quantities, even though some of the comments regarding the price of the software were far too rude to repeat here.

This year, though, it must be said that the marketing man at Nintendo has done it. There's a huge demand for consoles and the (small) range of software. this is because of huge ad-spends and the absurd number of Win a FABULOUS Nintendo compos everywhere.

The other reason is of course the Turtles. Nobody can argue with their popularity this Christmas and Nintendo have certainly got it right here.

Unfortunately, there's a bug in the lettuce: a shortage of Nintendo consoles in any form. A certain high-street multiple seems to have plenty (surely unfair to the Nintendo Independent dealers who've ploughed a hollow trough for so long?), however, so at least we can sell those new owners Nintendo software.

Well, er, there's another bug here, actually. Virtually every title is in short supply. Ironic, eh? We couldn't sell the machines for months, and now we can't get the software.

Talking of Nintendo, I had a lady return a copy of Ghosts'n'Goblins to us last week. She tossed it imperiously on the counter and loudly proclaimed that it didn't work. I made the usual 'well, that's very unusual noises' and exchanged the cartridge for another..

She returned a few hours later very red in the face. She wanted to see the manager and have a refund and all her bus fare refunded. After much huffing, I tried both copies in front of her to demonstrate that they did indeed work.

'But what about two players??', she blurted out. I explained that I didn't think that this particular game had a two player option, but if it did then the two players would take turns to play.

Ahem. It turned out that madam had been trying to play the game with her friend Rob...Rob the Nintendo Robot, that is. And, to the best of my knowledge, there are only two readily available games that work with the little plastic beast.

'But,' she said, 'the man in well-known-high-street-store said that I could use the robot with all games – that's why I bought the flipping system!'

I suggested she return to this shop. And, as she left, it was with difficulty that I refrained from yelling 'and don't forget to mention the bus fare...'

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ADVENTURELINE

Stuck in an adventure? Write in with the name of the game and the nature of your problem. Be as specific as possible and I'll do my best to answer (on these pages only so no SAEs please), and if I don't know the answer, I know a man who........! News, tips, gossip, anecdotes and adventuring trivia are also all most welcome. Write to me, Pat Winstanley, Adventureline, Pink Box, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU

NOW HEAR THIS!

If you want to contribute to these pages, get your pen out and start scribiling! Particularly welcome are short, self-contained hints and single problem solutions. I'm also interested to hear of PD and Shareware programs - the best will be reviewed (space permitting), as I've done with *Jungle Bungle* here. So get in touch!

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 1

Completing Augustus De Silva's solution

Having passed by the bouncer, enter the disco and ignore all the other Leisure Suit men. Sit by a girl called Fawn. Look at her to see some nice graphics, now use spray to make her smile. Give her the rose and candy and offer her the ring as marriage. Then get Larry to dance with fawn (note: Larry will do a 360 degree move that has to be seen to be believed - as shown in Saturday Night Fever). Walk to the shop and purchase a magazine and a cheap bottle of wine. Give it to the sailor and he should hand you a knife. If he doesn't, offer him money. You should have given Fawn $400 towards the Honeymoon Suite and she will head for the Quickie Wed. Go to the Quickie Wed by cab . Ignore the flasher and enter. Give the $100 to the vicar. Once you are married walk to the casino and enter the hotel at the back. Enter the lift and go to the fourth floor. Knock on the door with the heart. Once inside, turn on the radio and when an advert for Ajax Liquor Company is heard, note the phone number. Leave the hotel and the casino and hail a cab to go to the shops. When you get out, use the phone on the lamp post to order champagne. (Always say please or they will say "OK but I doubt you'll ever see it."). Now cab it back to the casino and the 4th floor. Knock on the door again and Fawn will let you in. Give her the champagne you ordered - it should be on the shelf. It will be censored again but this time Fawn gets out a rope and ties you up. Have no fear as you can use the sailor's knife to free yourself. Pick up the rope and read your magazine then go back to Leftie's. Knock on the cushioned door again and say the password. The pimp will still be watching TV. Go up the stairs and ignore the prostitute, instead climb out of the window and tie the rope to the fire escape and yourself. Use the hammer on the window and pick up the pills. Climb down the fire escape and get a cab back to the casino. Go to the hotel and to the 4th floor. Knock on the door with the heart and give the pills to Fawn. Make her swallow the pills and she should turn sex-mad. Don't turn down an opportunity like this. Afterwards, go to the 8th floor and go to the bar where you will meet Eve. And you know what anyone called Eve wants – an apple, you jerk!

JUNGLE BUNGLE

Written by Len Tucker Amiga £3.50 – Licenceware AMOS PD Library 25 Park Road Wigan WN6 7AA

Rarely do adventures combine the elements to keep both old and young alike glued to the screen. Built-in simplicity for children tends to bore adults, while complexities to keep adults happy quickly put off children. Now, from the AMOS Library comes a rare example of overall appeal in the shape of *Jungle Bungle*.

The game is set, predictably, in the jungle where your plane has crashed. Your task is (simply?) to return to civilisation. The game is entirely icon driven with short, clear text responses well within the capabilities of early readers.

Puzzles are of the "find the right object and use it in the right place" style, but more devious than they first appear. For instance, in the course of the game you must keep eating and drinking to survive, and while there is plenty of food around, there is also a light fingered monkey which keeps raiding your backpack until you figure out how to stop him. Very annoying when he pinches your last banana just as you were about to avoid starvation. And if you don't have any bananas with you, he beats you up instead.

Water is a simple necessity for survival but its collection is not so simple. Instead of ready made supplies for the taking you must collect your own by catching tropical raindrops in your bottle. Although I dislike arcade sequences in adventures, for once it becomes fun rather than annoying, and adds another dimension to the game.

The biggest difficulty I had with this game was not being able to play it while the kids were around - they kept pinching the mouse. So I had to stoop to clandestine play, only to watch puzzles which had kept me up into the early hours fall prey to devious young minds seemingly effortlessly!

Although shorter than most commercial offerings, the game is an easy match for quality and well worth the pitifully low price. Highly recommended for all a

LET ME KNOW!

If there's any special subject you'd like to see covered in Adventureline, then let me know at the address in the panel on the left.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2

The second part of a complete solution from Augustus De Silva

Right! Now that you are a millionaire you can go to the posh shop, Moloto Lira and buy some half price swim shorts. Go back to Eve's house and the trash cans outside should contain your passport. Pick it up as you'll need it for the cruise then go for a haircut and buy some sunscreen from the drugstore. Return to the Quickie Mart for a jumbo sized cool drink, then head for the music store. Chatting up the Spanish girl here will get you involved in Dr Nookie's evil plans so don't trust anyone as the KGB are after you. Say no to the man outside the saloon then get on the boat, showing your passport and ticket to the captain. When on board use map A (Cruise). Go to the barber. This guy is just as bad as the last barber as he gives you an expensive wig made from a mop. Next go to the bar (or nightclub) but don't buy a drink as the barman is a KGB agent. Just pick up the spinach dip and head for your cabin. Pick up the fruit and enter the other room. There you will meet Barbara's mum, and after she has said her piece leave and close the door behind you.

ZAK McKRACKEN

Another helping of Mike Bareham's solution.

You should now be controlling Leslie. Walk to the first massive door on the left. Use the ladder on the pedestal then pick up the crystal sphere. This will open the massive door. Pick up the ladder and walk through the door, then turn on the flashlight. Use the enclosed map called "Mars Face" and make your way to the generator room. When you are there turn on both switches until both guages are pointing at the green bit. Then take off your helmet. Now use the map again to find your way to the map room. When you get there, read the strange markings on the wall, make a diagram of them, and call them No. 2.

Switch to Zak. Open the door of Lou's Loans and go in. You should now have won the lotto. If it hasn't been picked just wait around outside for a while then go back in. If it has been picked then you will have won $10,000 which you will need for spending. Go back outside the shop and make your way to the bus. Use the kazoo. Use the cashcard in the card reader when the door opens. Use the reservations terminal and buy a ticket to Miami. Walk to the plane. Use the reservations terminal and buy a ticket to Cairo. Walk to the plane. Walk outside and walk to the right until you come to the sphinx. Look at the legs to see which has the strange markings on it. When you find the markings use the yellow crayon on the markings. Now draw diagram No. 2 which will open a secret door. Go through the secret door and use the map enclosed called "Sphinx Map" to find the room with the secret panel in it. Make your way to this room, and when you get there, switch to Annie.

CAPTIVE

A few hints to get you started.

Walls - If on ballbearings, push using right mouse button on the forward icon - don't push too far or you might cover something interesting.

Power - Poke your finger in the sockets then touch the chests of the androids to recharge them. But don't touch anything else or you'll blow it up. A charged finger makes a useful weapon in the early stages if you want to fight from a distance. Sockets become more scarce in the later stages, so take every opportunity to top up.

Maps - Buy Optic III, the mapper, as soon as possible. Keep it running continuously (but watch your power) to show areas yet to be visited. Optic V acts as a compass and used in conjunction with the mapper helps early orientation.

Money - Save it. You'll need loads to restore your health when you meet heavier monsters.

Stairs - Jump up or down stairs when a monster is directly above or below for a satisfying smart-bomb effect!

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Cosmo's Message for the Month.

"Yo Dudes, Cosmo ere. Dis is da first time I've bin in ACE, da mag looks ok from ere. Anyway Dudes and Dudettes look at the stuff on dis page its totaly well ard. Mr Mike and the GLC crew's bin workin on it for ages.

"Anyhows Dudes, just a note for thems of you that pop into our showroomy thing in Highams Parky place, Mr Mike has got in some new dude to work for me, name of NILBOG, stupid name if yous askin me but Mr Mike is da Boss. So Ta Ta for now Dudes and member you can't loose with a firm thats run by a Teddy Bear.

Cosmo.

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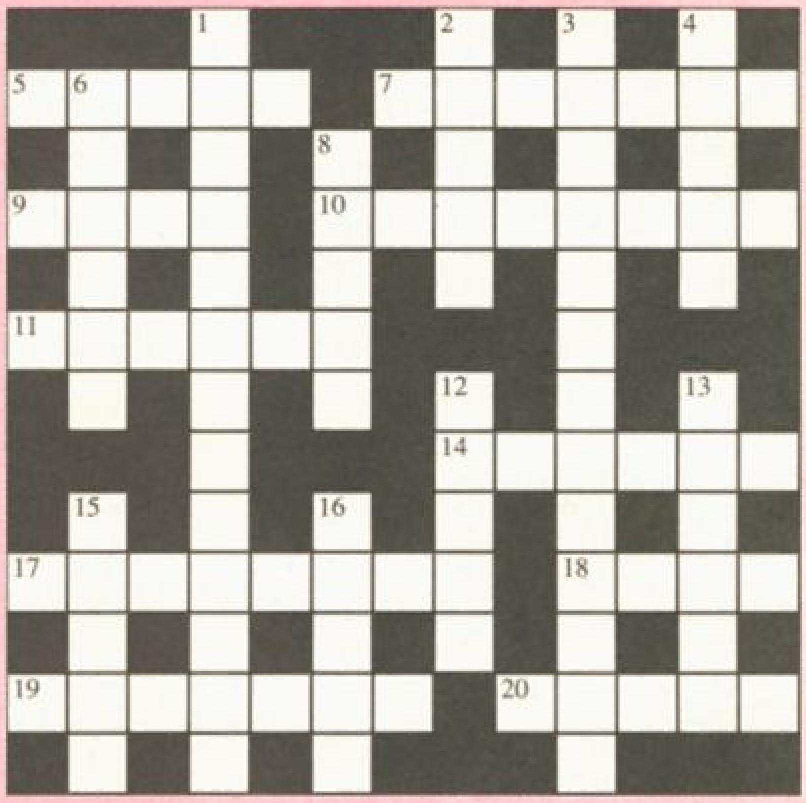
PUZZLE PRIZES

Until recently, we've been offering £25 cash prizes to winners of the ACE puzzle and crossword, but several people have been asking us for games instead. From now on all prizes will be in software, so please make sure you include your name, address, and machine format when you enter.



CLUES ACROSS

5 Game putting Max in disarray (5)
7 Finger a student put on type of computer (7)
9 Game giving one a sharp feeling of pain (4)
10 Chained to a game from US Gold (8)
11 Nothing in new Acorn to provide light (6)
14 Grudge about game from Linel (6)
17 Constable taking motor for provider of console games (2,6)
18 Managed to get across Ubi Soft game (4)
19 It's developed by Omega for hand-held entertainment (4,3)
20 Person tending to cast runes (5)

CLUES DOWN

1 Mad WREN coming round to play military game (4,9)
2 Game - you can find it in brown case (5)
3 Game Boy it's not safe to be with! (4,9)
4 Gapes surprisingly at parts of magazine (5)
6 Non-digital type of computer from Angola (6)
8 Awful waste of a game (5)
12 Computer that's a snake in the grass! (5)
13 Game played in nets (6)
15 A software house in the main (5)
16 Point out it's an aid to climbing (5)

MINI QUIZ!

Consider yourself a genius (well, almost) if you can answer these questions correctly. Answers are on the Blitter End (page 178).

1. How many creatures, in the original game, lurk beneath the Trap Door?
2. What is the colour of Bomb Jack's Cape?
3. What came from the desert?
4. Which brand of sweets were advertised in Gremlin's game T-Wrecks?

Write and tell us if you got them right! We won't believe you!

HOW TO ENTER

Every month we offer a free game worth up to £25 for your machine if you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat. The address to send your solution to is:

ACE January 91 Crossword,
Priory Court
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EC1R 3AU

The deadline for entries is always the first Thursday of the month named on the cover. In this case, it's Thursday 3rd January 1991.

DON'T MISS THE MEGA QUIZ!

Next month we're celebrating the New Year with a real test of computer games know-how – and you'll be able to test your score against some of the big names in the business! Find out how much people REALLY know about games...in ACE issue 41.

SOLUTION TO DECEMBER 90 CROSSWORD

As ACE has now changed it's release dates (see Blitter End), we will be printing the solution to December's crossword in the next issue (February 91, Issue 41). After all, we can't go giving away the answers before the closing date, eh? The winner will be announced in the same issue.

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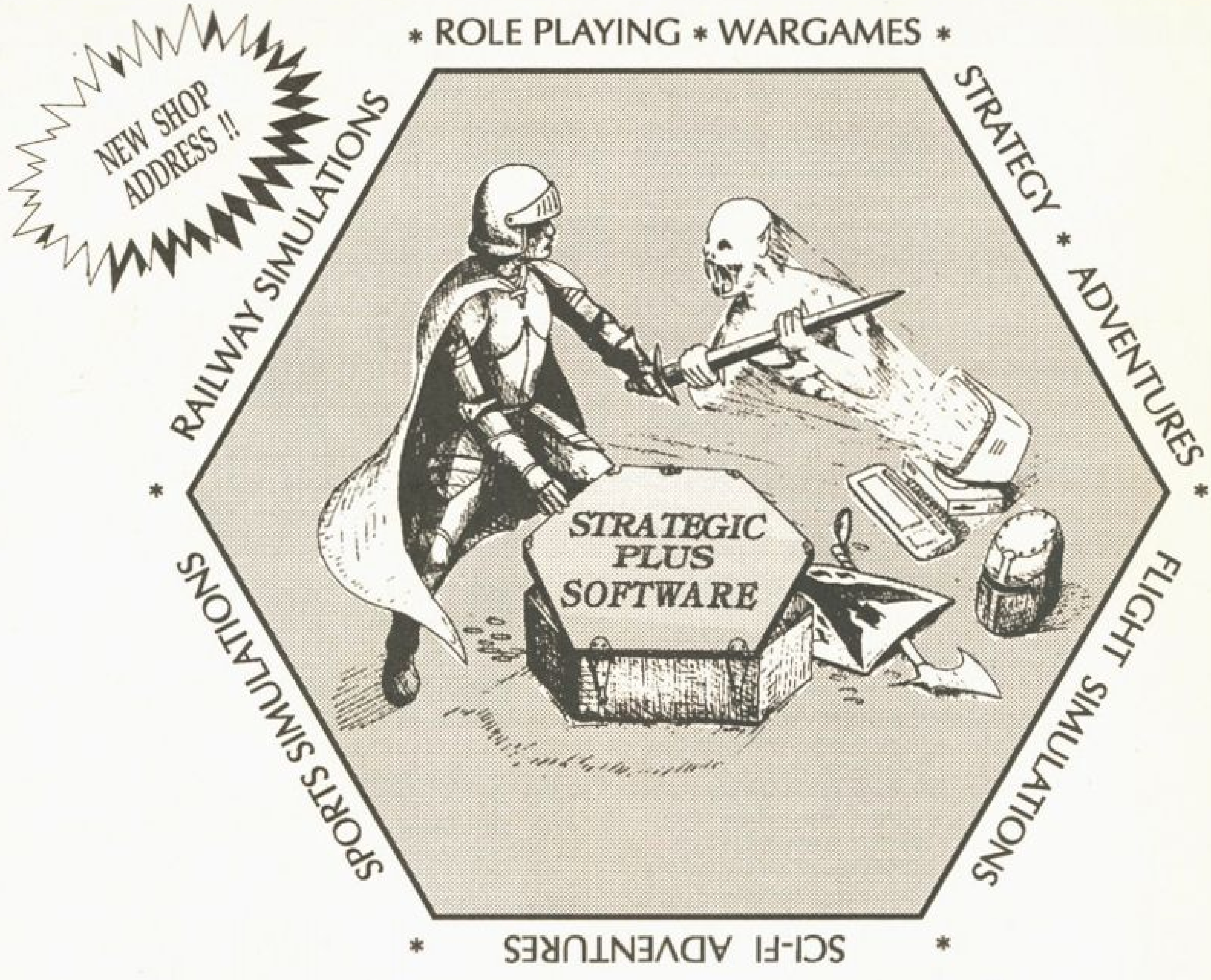
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FREEBIES

Mark Smiddy dons his blue overalls and goes (boldly?) where no self-respecting plumber has gone before.

PLUMB CRAZY

Atari ST £3.50 - Joystick

Every once in a while comes a game that's so different, so simple and so incredibly addictive it achieves instant stardom. *Plumb Crazy* is not one of these – but it's based on one of the most recent – *Pipe Mania*. The story of how it came about is simple: the author went round to a friend's house, had a go at the original, thought "How much!" went home and wrote his own version in *STOS*... Nasty words like plagiarism, look and feel, and even piracy spring to mind.

But this sort of thing is rife in the software industry – especially games produced by amateurs – so it's worth taking a look at. Older readers might just remember Nolan Bushnell's aromatically titled, *Pong*. This was the original table tennis game and arguably the thing that started the ball rolling. The idea quickly developed into *Breakout* which later formed the basis for *Arkanoid* – and its associated clones.

Then there's *Panic*, which probably spawned the plethora of platform games: Psygnosis' *Barbarian, Bubble Bobble, Manic Miner, Chuckie Egg* to name but a few. The fact is, new ideas are rarer than 24 carat diamonds and just as precious. No matter how good an idea might seem, someone, somewhere is bound to have seen something like it before and *Plumb Crazy* is just a dim reflection of *Pipe Mania*.

WE WANT YOU

"Cor blimey mate – they haven't covered Revenge Of The Mutant Hero Terrapins." Well, if I haven't seen it, I can hardly write about it. Drop YOUR PD/Shareware game to Mark Smiddy, Co. ACE Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AU marking your envelope in LARGE LETTERS "PINK PD". Remember – if you don't tell the world, the world won't sign cheques!

The idea of the game is simple – all good ideas are. All you have to do is construct a pipeline of x pieces inside a set time limit – a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. Sound easy – don't you believe it. The "pieces", shapes like left-hand-bend, junction etc., appear in a set pattern each turn and one must be placed before another appears. The fluid in the pipe only flows one way so all the pipes must connect correctly. Later screens see the introduction of ONE-WAY pipes more pieces and less time. It just keeps getting harder. Control is by Joystick only, somewhere *STOS* is a little weak, so a mouse or keyboard option would be nice. How about another version Keith?

No one can doubt the origins of the idea but does it really matter. It's the game that counts and the author of *Plumb Crazy* has done the game playing public proud. It's addictive enough to drive most people round the U bend. So much so, it almost became grounds for divorce in one household. Wait for it: it was the husband that couldn't get on his machine because the wife wanted to play! She'd even get up at six o' clock JUST to get her morning fix. In this office it's already caused three stand up fights and this writer had to be surgically removed from the ST just to write the feature. And you thought PD software was dull! Even if you have "the original" get this – you'd be plumb crazy not to. An Amiga version is promised – I can't wait!

SHAMELESS PLUG

Once again thanks to: Sandra "Can I Pick 'Em?" Sharkey, The AMOS PD Library, 25 Park Road, Wigan, Lancs. WN6 7AA. Tel: (0942) 495261.

DM-GENESIS

Amiga £NA – Mouse

Designer Mouseware, the inventors of Charityware – best known for the Amiga utility, *Sleepy 3* – would like prospective cheat writers to know about *DM-Genesis*, the "Solutions Creator". A Solutions Creator is like a reference book on a disk – solutions are built from a series of screens which can be browsed using a simple text viewer. Up to ten cross-references can be attached to each screen which can either call up other screens in the database or run external programs – to incorporate graphics, sounds etc. Each solution can have a maximum of 200 menu items and a virtually unlimited number of screens. Typical search times from floppy disk based on a 100K database are under a second.

According to the Designer Mouseware team, the system could be used to create simple "paperback" adventures like those made famous by Steve Jackson or complete software manuals. It should be around by the time you read this on Amiga, with ST and PC versions to follow. By the way, the Amiga version of DM-Genesis was written by Yours Truly.

JUNGLE BUNGLE

Amiga £3.50 – Mouse

This is an absolute must for adventure fiends – and anyone contemplating fifty quid on the *AMOS* package, because beside being another fantastic demo of what can be done in *AMOS* it's a beautiful game. It's so good my learned colleague, Pat Winstanley (ACE ADVENTURELINE) and I, refuse to write any more about it until our esteemed editor gives us a colour page on which to rave over it, so there. Kids from about 12 years upward should find this a real treat – look out Magnetic Scrolls...

MIX N' MATCH

ST £3.50 – Mouse

Keith Feeny (Plumb Crazy) has been at it again, only this time he's prepared something to really make your brain itch – a version of Pelmanism! If there's two things that stick out from one of Mr Feeny's offerings it's style and addictiveness. Mix n' Match, does not have the all engrossing, grab you by the throat, appeal of his other title but it does a fair job. You start with a set of blank cards and by selecting two at random try to find matching pairs. Sounds dull – but especially in this incarnation it becomes a great challenge to develop mental agility – memory. The three difficulty levels determine the pictures used from easy to incredibly hard – "Right, that's one brown flask and a green one, with the brown one in front, errr...." Adding to the "fun", Keith has used some weird sound effects which border on ethereal in quality. One for people with a "particular" taste in games – but a very high-quality implementation nevertheless.

Stay tuned for next month's PD games instalment – more gamepower for less cash!

BACK ISSUES

ACE Back Issues can expand your collection – and your mind. Here's a checklist of topics covered in previous mags...

Back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 inclusive (except ACE 11) at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to: **ACE Back Issues, PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 6AA.**

- **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the US Air Force by Perceptronics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]
- **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]
- **BATTLETECH**, "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound and lifelike controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]
- **CD-I** (Compact Disc Interactive) is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.
- **CDTV**, Commodore's attempt to bring multimedia to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]
- **COSMIC OSMO**, the world's first hypergame - courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermdia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.
- **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]
- **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]
- **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]
- **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]
- **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]
- **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]
- **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief - invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]
- **NEO-GEO**, a new home- and arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. ACE gave you an exclusive chance to win one in issue 34. [ACE32/34]
- **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]

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THE BLITTER END

THATCH KEEPS MUM

Mrs Thatcher announced her resignation on the very day that Blitter went to press – and the question, naturally, on everybody's lips was: now that Mrs T has relinquished the reins and responsibilities of government, will she have more time for playing games?

'Will she WHAT??' said a harrassed spokesman from the Home Office? Blitter repeated his question. 'Video games??', came the response, 'I'll have to get back to you on that one...'

We're waiting.

*

One of the unsung hazards of computer entertainment is overeating. Sit yourself in front of that screen with a dozen or so Indian dishes and a joystick and – you know how it feels – suddenly Heaven seems just a few light-years closer. I was all compassion then when Midatlantic Films invited me to view Channel 4's broadcast of the Oprah Winfrey Show discussing The Nintendo Phenomenon – just as US magazine National Enquirer informed us that Oprah has put on 69 pounds in weight and her 'disgusted boyfriend' has called off their romance. Good riddance, Oprah – stick with Mario.

*

Atari recently announced their operating results for the third quarter of 1990, with net income of $3 million on sales of $89.1 million. According to Sam Tramiel, 'The Atari TT030 system based on the Motorola 68030 microprocessor, which started shipping during the third quarter, has been well received. In addition, the Company is shipping an additional 9 software titles for the Lynx', which means that by Christmas there will be, wait for it, 17 games available (if you're lucky enough to find them). No mention of the ST, you notice. It's complete demise in the US, accompanied by its current poor showing in Europe against the Amiga, must be a good argument for an aggressive company like Atari to quietly forget all about it and concentrate on new machines, like the Panther (see page 7 of this issue).

*

Remember *OutRun*? The original conversion was really a collossal turkey in every sense of the word. It was a Christmas release that got dished up for the eager public just in time for stocking filling but, oops!, just too late for the magazines to review it in their Christmas issues.

By the middle of January, when the first reviews began trickling out, it was fairly clear that anyone who'd walked away with a copy was almost bound to be disappointed. There were even suggestions – surely untrue – that USGold had committed the unpardonable crime of actually witholding the product from the magazines for fear of getting poor marks and losing sales.

Whatever the truth of this situation, USG suffered a lot of flak because of OutRun, though they've worked hard on quality since then to put their name back in lights.

So what's the point of all this reminiscing, eh? Well...have you noticed the absence of certain high profile Christmas releases in this issue? We certainly have. *Total Recall*, for one, is strangely overdue – the rumour is that the game was a major disappointmen and has been sent back to the drawing board. Let's hope others follow this worthy example. If not, buyer beware.

Blit blit!

ACE HAPPY HOUR HOTLINE

Don't forget the ACE helpline if you want a quick response to something gamesy that's keeping you foxed. Just call our HAPPY HOUR HOTLINE on 071 251 6222 and ask for David Upchurch or Jim Douglas. If you've got a query about mail order or the readers pages, ask for Mel (that's her, above). The Hotline is open Monday-Friday 5pm-6pm, though we may ask you to call back if we're under heavy deadline pressure. Please note, we *cannot* accept calls outside the Happy Hour. We'd also like, at the risk of seeming a load of antisocial creeps, to remind callers that the purpose of the Hotline is to answer queries and not (you know who you are) to discuss that awful skin ailment you've got...

THEY SHALL BE CONSOLED...

Paul Hart of Shrewsbury, Matthew Corker of Rotherham, Atherstone's Ian Manders, Andrew Hall from Huddersfield, and Dion Ekin from Harrogate were the five winners of Elite's Console Crazy competition, winning respectively NES, Master, Gameboy, Megadrive, and Lynx consoles. Well done, lads!

AND GO TO PARIS...

Our Electronic Zoo competition was won by Sonia K of Wealdstone. Enjoy those crepes on your trip to Paris, Sonia! And don't end up like Oprah Winfrey!

AND GRAB SEGA FREEBIES...

The winners of our Megadrive column compo were Kevin Wafer of Surbiton, Carl Bown of Bournemouth, and Dominic Donleavy of Maidstone, all of whom correctly identified the UK Megadrive as the US Genesis.

THINK 8, THINK ACE!

ACE has always been published on the first Thursday of every month, but from now on it will appear on the shelves on the 8th of every month instead.

We've done this for two reasons. First, the old arrangement meant that some issues had shorter production schedules, leading to our having to postpone some of our coverage to the following month. It also resulted in restricted availability for some issues. The new system will make a big difference, so **think 8, think ACE**!

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NO-ONE HAD THE GUTS UNTIL NOW

NARC The arcade action thriller with the BIG finish.

Infiltrate the criminal underworld - your mission is to seek out and destroy the king pin of the MR BIG CORPORATION -

IF YOU GET THAT FAR.

You'll have to outwit his enormous army of body guards... gangs of charisma-bypass patients in trench coats, the bullet brain with the build of a rhinoceros and the breath of a dung beetle, packs of vicious canine yappies, the psychotic clown with an evil sense of humour -

YOU'LL DIE, BUT NOT LAUGHING!

Then there's the gas guzzling cadillac jock - a cool specimen, elbow hanging on the door rail, a serious looking piece in his hand and ready to blow you away as he rolls down main street leaving you coughing lead.

It's not all bad!... You've got a chopper to back you up, a mean, shiny street machine, some heavy metal hardware and some pretty neat moves. And what about the king pin... did I say he was Mr. Big?...

No, he's
MR. **BIG!**

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HE'S BACK... TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT
ROBOCOP 2
TM

EVEN IN THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

The future is a rough place, Detroit is a bankrupt city... torn apart by the decadent forces of the Old Man and his corrupt corporation. If you want to die - then walk the streets, if you want to live - then pray for the return of **Robocop!**

Robocop 2 has justice in mind... a kind of justice only he can deliver! Take on Detroit's evil mastermind and his mega-corporation in some of the most action-packed scenes ever devised for maximum entertainment value. **Detroit is falling apart - it's time to put it all back together!**

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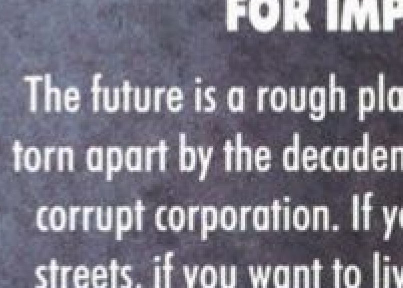

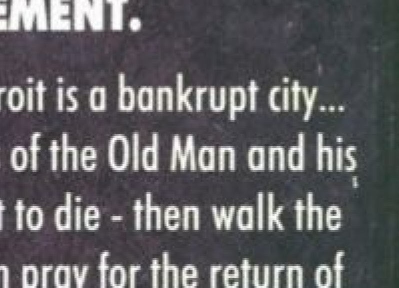

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